Blast into space with Tom Hanks, Luke Skywalker, and the Sci-Fi Channel.

BY ALLISON VILLONE

IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG, HOT SUMMER, but the Sci-Fi Channel keeps it cool with a great lineup of special events guaranteed to make you stay inside, away from those damaging ultraviolet rays. To commemorate the June 30 release of the Universal Pictures film *Apollo 13,* starring Tom Hanks, the Sci-Fi Channel, USA Network and Hardee's is offering viewers a chance to win trips to U.S.A. Space Camp. Five winning parents will each be able to take a child to either Alabama or Florida to learn just what it takes to be an astronaut. For more details, stay tuned to the Sci-Fi Channel.

In July, celebrate Independence Day in another dimension, with fifty-four back-to-back episodes of *The Twilight Zone,* the classic television series created by Rod Serling, airing exclusively on the Sci-Fi Channel. The *Twilight Zone Marathon* airs Monday, July 3 and Tuesday, July 4, beginning at 9 A.M. Eastern Standard Time.*



Tom Hanks aboard the mock Apollo 13, during filming of the soon-to-be-released Universal motion picture.

One of the world's most powerful superheroes returns to keep an alien ship containing deadly weapons out of the hands of evil forces in the Sci-Fi Channel Planetary Première *Guyver 2: Dark Hero.* It airs Saturday, July 8 at 8 P.M. and 12 A.M.; Sunday, July 9 at 8 P.M. and 12 A.M.; and Saturday, July 15 at 4 P.M.

Fuzzy, razor-toothed aliens wreak havoc on the planet in search of their favorite snack—Earthlings—on a full-day *Critters* Fest. Sci-Fi airs *Critters* on Sunday, July 16 at 12 P.M.; *Critters 3* at 2 P.M.; and *Critters 4* at 4 P.M.

Then witness the greatest battles of the legendary King of All Monsters, direct from the Land of the Rising Sun, in a week-long tribute to Godzilla. Five days of films, including *King Kong vs. Godzilla; King Kong Escapes; Godzilla on Monster Island; Godzilla vs. Megalon;* and *Godzilla vs. the Cosmic Monster,* air the week of Monday, July 17, at 9 P.M. and 1 A.M. each night.

Later, Sci-Fi presents a weekend devoted to three of the most popular science fiction films of all time: *Star Wars, The Empire Strikes Back,* and *Return of the Jedi,* along with four behind-the-scenes specials. These special programs air Friday, July 28; Saturday, July 29; and Sunday, July 30. See schedule for details.

The terrifying Gill-Man from the Black Lagoon returns on Sunday, July 30. *The Creature from the Black Lagoon, Revenge of the Creature,* and *The Creature Walks among Us* all air on Sunday, July 30 at 1 P.M., 3 P.M. and 5 P.M. respectively.

In August, *The Hidden 2,* a Sci-Fi Première Feature, will air. This action adventure film starring Kate Hodge and Raphael Sbarge will be presented Saturday, August 5 at 8 P.M. and 12 A.M.; Sunday, August 6 at 4:30 P.M.; and Saturday, August 12 at 4 P.M. Just for animation fans: The Sci-Fi Channel is proud to present a long-awaited Planetary Première: *Akira.* Based on the hugely popular graphic novels about a group of motorcycle-riding teenagers in post-apocalyptic Tokyo, this landmark *anime* title set new standards for animation and story-telling when it was first released in Japan in 1988. It airs Saturday, August 19 at 8 P.M. and 12 A.M.; Sunday August 20 at 3 P.M.; and Saturday, August 26 at 4 P.M.

Fans of the popular producer and director Charles Band will want to tune in when the Sci-Fi Channel presents a Full Moon Pictures Festival, showcasing notable films by this sci-fi personality. Movies include *Doctor Mordrid: Master of the Unknown; Crash and Burn; Parasite; Trancers II: The Return of Jack Deth;* and *Trancers III: Deth Lives.* They will air the week of Monday, August 21 at 9 P.M. and 1 A.M.

Have a great summer; and next time you retire to your air-conditioned room, remember to check out *The Dominion,* the Sci-Fi Channel's continually evolving—and very cool—Internet site on the World Wide Web. Address: http: //www.scifi.com. □

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Despite Saturn and Jaguar, 3DO still wins the gaming consoles war.

BY JEFFREY FRENTZEN

THE AD BLITZ IS COMING at you from all sides—the "next generation" of electronic gaming consoles and playware are here, some of it more expensive than ever. Dig deep and cough up the shekels … you can experience "through-the-windshield" driving games, "reaction shooter" cartoon violence, and "three-quarters overhead-view" action, with "all the excitement" of 32- and 64-bit graphics. Recent advances made by console and personal-computer hardware have yielded impressive gains for gamers. With faster graphics, more powerful processors, and large amounts of RAM (random-access memory) in base models, you get realistic 3-D animation, much-improved texture mapping, and better sound.



Wayne's World's own Tia Carrere stars in the interactive sci-fi movie game, the Daedalus Encounter, soon to be available for 3DO systems.

Sega's Saturn, the long-awaited replacement for the venerable Sega Genesis console, has been available throughout North America since May. Its competition includes the 3DO, Atari Jaguar, Sony PlayStation-X, and the Nintendo Ultra64.

The Saturn, which is only slightly larger than the Genesis, comes with eight processor chips, including three fast RISC (reduced instruction-set computing) processors. The Jaguar has five processors contained in three chips; two of them are proprietary 64-bit processors, the third is a standard Motorola 68000 used as a co-processor. As with the Saturn, the PlayStation is based on 32-bit RISC (reduced instruction-set computing) processors. All three can run software from CD-ROMs and offer a 24-bit palette of 16.7 million colors, although the Jaguar comes with extra graphics-processing power.

The Jaguar, which Atari released two years ago, has not yet caught on with gamers in a big way. Although it has some advantages over the other systems, notably in its superior graphics performance, Atari has been slow to fix problems, and software has been slow out of the gate. Nonetheless, with Sega, Sony, and Nintendo breathing down Atari's neck with their own high-end consoles, the Jaguar's price has recently dropped from $250 to $160. The Jaguar package contains the game machine, one controller, an AC adapter, and the game *Cybermorph*. The Sega Saturn is expected to retail for $350-450; the PlayStation will probably fall into the $300-350 range.

The Saturn's standard-issue controller holds eight buttons (six on front, two on top), plus a Pause button. It has a fairly impressive 16-bit built-in audio processor. Its console has a communications port, which will let you connect to on-line services (such as the Internet and the Sega Channel) for multiplayer gaming. The Sega Channel's on-line network will provide games on demand, delivered over standard cable-TV for $10-15 per month. According to Sega, Sega Channel will begin offering Saturn wares sometime during the summer of 1996.

The Jaguar, which measures 9.5-by-10-by-2.5 inches, also offers a 32-bit cartridge and a Digital Signal Processor port that supports high-speed synchronous serial input/output. The Jaguar controller, an eight-directional joypad, provides three fire buttons, pause and option buttons, and a twelve-key keypad. The Jaguar CD player costs in the neighborhood of $200.

Of all the systems, Jaguar comes with the most impressive list of add-on enhancements and doodads for the serious gamer. Atari is developing a modem to allow multiplayer Jaguar games over phone lines, expected for release this fall. Time-Warner Cable's Full Service Network (FSN) is planning to offer Jaguar games over cable lines, allowing subscribers to download games to consoles. As with the Sega Channel, such downloaded software remains in memory and playable until the next time the machine is powered down.

Numerous start-ups are being built around peripherals designed to add features to existing systems. All Systems Go is developing "Control Station," which plugs into the Jaguar controller ports and lets you play wireless. The infrared remote controller also provides options whereby the user can make games run faster or slower. ICD and Black Cat Design plan to sell the CatBox, a separate console that provides Jaguar users with enhanced video and audio. Another product, CatNet, can accommodate

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Jaguar networks with up to thirty-two units 1,000 feet apart. In a similar vein, Mars Merchandising now offers the JagDapter, which provides composite video and stereo sound and costs $49.95.

The Jaguar's good graphics capability has led at least one vendor, Victor Maxx, to produce a virtual-reality headset. Although the Cybermaxx can provide full virtual reality effects, it needs Jaguar games written expressly for the helmet. The catch is, none exist at this time—and prices start at $700. Atari and Virtuality Group are codeveloping their own virtual reality headset, which should be available this Christmas and cost $200.

Sony's PlayStation-X, which has been available in Japan for about a year, offers just one 32-bit RISC processor, albeit at a faster speed than other systems. It will be released in the U.S. in September, carrying a $299 retail price. The one-chip design will keep the PlayStation dramatically less bulky than its competitors. Its graphics engine is compatible with full-motion MPEG video standards, which results in extremely realistic video playback. In addition, it promises to offer CD-quality sound. The PlayStation's ability to display spectacular graphic effects puts it close to the various 3DO systems.

Speaking of 3DO, a slew of companies has developed or plans to release systems based on this advanced gaming platform. In addition to units from Panasonic and LG Electronics (formerly Goldstar), Sanyo, Mitsubishi, and Samsung are marketing 3DO systems. An IBM PC-compatible 3DO add-in card from Creative Labs is now available.

3DO systems look like no-name VCRs with game controllers and plug into your home-entertainment system. They run 3DO software, audio CDs (including support for CD+G), and Kodak Photo-CDs, and will eventually support video CDs. 3DO consoles can handle up to eight controllers at one time, plus a keyboard, mouse, and light gun, and peripherals.

On balance, 3DO buries the other systems in terms of processing power. The 3DO can display full-motion video, texture-mapped 3-D landscapes, and other astonishing visuals, using a 32-bit RISC processor and a graphics engine running off custom graphics and animation processors. It's expensive, though. Panasonic's unit can run as high as $500; the Goldstar version goes for about $300, and prices are expected to come down over time. There are currently over 300 software developers working on games, and the first wave of titles have been very impressive.

The 3DO's future is uncertain; however, a 64-bit add-on, the M2 Accelerator, is set for release sometime this year. This product may be the first iteration of the rumored 3DO-compatible 64-bit machine, which was originally announced for Christmas 1995 release. A 64- bit, $300-400 stand-alone system is also expected hot on the heels of the M2Accelerator. All current 3DO software is supposed to run on the upgraded system, which is

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based on a 64-bit RISC processor. Its performance is roughly four times greater than the PlayStation or even a high-end Pentium PC. In a move that is uncharacteristic for console vendors, 3DO's makers are providing an upgrade path in which old and new units will be 100 percent compatible.

If all goes as planned, 3DO users will download software via cable-TV and play games with others using a multiplayer hookup or phone. However, the system is more than an arcade-game machine; it was designed with the potential to act as an interface to many other functions that will be available on the broadband networks now in the planning and testing stages.

Nintendo's tardy Ultra64 has the potential to be another monster contender in the field. The $200-250 cartridge-based system seems likely to rival or surpass the Saturn and Jaguar in the gosh-wow-graphics department. Codeveloped by Silicon Graphics and Nintendo, the unit's 64-bit processor blazes at an impressive 100Mhz, which makes it as fast as high-end Pentium PCs. As with the other new systems, it can support a 16.7 million color palette and reportedly will come with a high-resolution HDTV display. The hardware has been completed for some time and is waiting for Nintendo to package and release it.

Games for the 3DO system are going to be lining the aisles at Toy R Us this fall, as projects long in the pipeline finally spill forth. One important title that's already on shelves, *The Daedalus Encounter*, is an intriguing and, at times, very puzzling interactive movie featuring actress Tia Carrere. Panasonic is planning to release *Strahl*, an adventure game offering forty-eight different endings. *D*, a hit in Japan as *D's Diner*, will ship at the end of the year, and boasts 5 million-polygon-per-second movie images. (Take my word for it, that's *a lot*.)

Origin's *Prowler*, one more in a seemingly endless stream of mecha-warrior titles, will be available first for 3DO in October. At least this game promises an ambitious scope, letting users react to realistic environments on various alien worlds; different levels of gravity, temperature, and air speed can have a dramatic effect on game play. While we are on the subject of alien worlds, 3DO *Doom* is also on the way.

Sega recently announced that 100 games will be available for its Saturn system by the end of this year. Unfortunately, Sega jumped the gun with Saturn—they originally planned to ship it in September, but "pre-launched" it in May before many of the game developers had time to finish working on their games. Of the bunch that shipped early, check out *Panzer Dragoon*, in which you ride on the back of a dragon and shoot at 3-D monsters; and *Daytona USA*, a port of the popular racing game that uses three gaming modes, five levels of difficulty, and various views of the race. Other games include *Bug*, in which you are a bug on a rotating playing field that changes perspective from 3/4 to full 3D; your goal is to save your insect friends from a black spider. A version of *Virtua Fighter*, the arcade sensation featuring polygon fighters, is out; and don't miss *Clockwork Knight*, a fantasy-action game in which you play animated toys loose in someone's home.

Digital Pictures, which has also brewed some decent IBM PC games, such as *Slam City* and *Corpse Killer*, has a number of Saturn-based titles waiting in the wings. *Viral Transmission*, a strategy game in which you try to prevent terrorists from absconding with a deadly virus, is reportedly done in the mode of the notorious violence epic, *Night Trap*. And in *Cyclopathic*, you are a bike messenger chasing another messenger, who is crazed. *Maximum Surge* is an action-oriented interactive movie starring Walter ("Chekov") Koenig and *Baywatch*'s Yasmine Bleeth.

Electronic Arts (EA) is investing heavily in 3DO, Saturn, and PlayStation games. For the latter system, *PGA Tour Golf 96* and *FIFA Soccer 96* are scheduled to ship in September. *PGA Golf Tour* gives users new playing strategies, such as the ability to put backspin on a ball. These two titles will also be available for the Saturn. For 3DO and PlayStation, expect to see *Wing Commander III* and *Psychic Detective*, an interactive movie in which you play a detective who can move among the minds of different characters. It is a collaboration between EA and Colossal Pictures. *Space*

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In the PC game X-Com: Terror from the Deep *from Microprose, aliens stage their hostile takeover from the Earth's oceans.*

Hulk, coming for 3DO systems, follows in the *Doom* tradition, as you blow up aliens in a futuristic setting. *Shred Fest*, with a snowboarding scenario, was rumored to be a 3DO title but is now only scheduled for PlayStation. This four-player game features a Top-40 rock music soundtrack. Another EA title, *Shock Wave II* promises high-speed alien-war action featuring a fighter, gun turret, and a hovercraft, which will let you control up to three vehicles simultaneously.

Finally, who says there's nothing new for what now qualifies as "lower end" game consoles? *Mortal Friday* is October 13, when *Mortal Kombat III* will be available for Super Nintendo, Genesis, Gear Gear, and Game Boy platforms. □

X-COM: Terror from the Deep, by Microprose, 180 Lakefront Drive, Hunt Valley, MD 21030-2245, Tel. (410) 771-0440

If there's one rule for first contact with an alien civilization, it's this: don't do it at home. Ask any South Sea islander. Ask any Native American. Even if it seems to have the best of intentions, when a more technologically advanced culture drops in to visit, it's still bad news.

Well, the aliens in Microprose's *XCOM* series have anything but good intentions. In the first episode of this series of tactical/strategic games, they began a slow but steady invasion of Earth. Now in *XCOM: Terror from the Deep*, they're trying again, this time with bases hidden under the waves and mutant creatures made from normally harmless ocean dwellers.

Fresh off the two best strategy games ever to make it to the PC market, *Civilization* and *Master of Orion*, this new title adds a tactical component to the mix. As commander of a special UN-like organization set up to defeat the alien threat, you have to make all the decisions for the defense of the Earth.

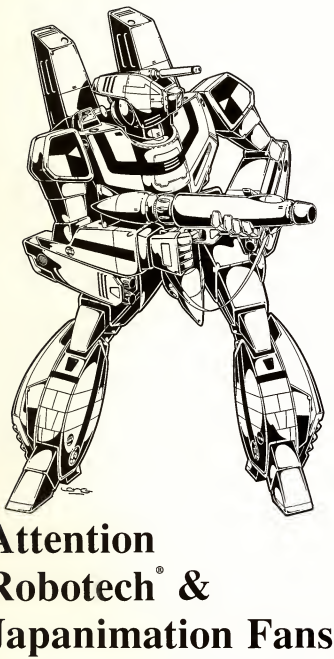
On the strategic level, you have to choose sites and build the bases from which your defenses will operate. These sea-floor installations will provide almost all the resources available in the game, so planning their location and expansion is critical to keeping things rolling. Within the bases, you will buy, build, and outfit "flying submarines"; research new technologies; manufacture new weapons and devices; and manage your human troops. As in *Civilization*, there are a number of avenues for research, and each new technology that you explore may turn over more possibilities. Unlike *Civilization*, most of these technologies are not developed from scratch—they're stolen from the aliens.

When an alien sub is spotted, the tactical portion of the game comes into play. You select a crew of aquanauts, equip them with weapons, and load them into a sub. Your alien SWAT team rushes to the site, ready to take them on. Once on the battlefield, you make every move in a turn-based combat system. Tell the aquanauts where to walk, shoot, crouch, jump, climb.

With *Terror from the Deep*, most alien activity takes place deep under the ocean. Microprose has upgraded the graphics from the original *XCOM*, providing under-seascapes that range from wreckage-strewn depths to beautifully detailed coral reefs. The time of day and depth of the water have a great effect on visibility. Land a crew in the middle of the night and you'll be lucky to see the bazooka in front of your face. Aliens will also come above the water to terrorize human ships, cities, and towns. Your troops can find themselves pinned down in an Tokyo alley, fighting their way through a cave on Crete, or blowing up staterooms on a cruise ship.

The variety doesn't stop at the settings. Aliens come in all shapes and sizes: deep-sea versions of the bug-eyed "sectoids," gill men (looking much like the Gill Man), squid faced "deep ones," floating brains, armored lobster men, and many others. Each of these creatures has its own abilities and weaknesses. As the game goes on, missions will include a greater variety of monsters, and the tougher

Continued on page 72



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Philip K. Dick's story comes to the big screen as *Screamers.*

BY ROBERT MARTIN

FOURTEEN YEARS AFTER HIS DEATH, the reputation of Philip K. Dick continues to grow. While it's lamentable that more honor wasn't piled on him before his death, it is gratifying to those of us who devoured each new work during his lifetime to know that so much of his work remains in print to win the admiration of new generations.

Of course, a large part of the interest in Dick stems from the films drawn from his work, *Blade Runner* and *Total Recall*, though (as many have pointed out before me) both films took wide liberties with their source material. *Screamers*, to be released by Sony Tristar this October with Peter Weller (of *Robocop* and *Buckaroo Bonzai*) in the lead role, is the first time that a Dick story has been brought to the screen with minimal storyline tampering.



Peter Weller stars in the latest Philip K. Dick movie adaptation, Screamers, *set for a fall release.*

The story *Screamers* is based upon, "Second Variety," was written in 1952 and first published in the now-forgotten magazine *Space Science Fiction* in May of 1953—a period that marked the peak of anti-Communist hysteria as Hollywood came under scrutiny from the House UnAmerican Activities Committee for shades of "Red" and "Pink" influence. Considering the times, the boldest aspect of Dick's story was that it concerned the aftermath of a Soviet-American war that had devastated Earth, and the handful of combatants—both Russian and American—who band together in an effort to survive the final weapon.

Screenwriter Dan O'Bannon began work on the adaptation back in 1979, immediately after the release of *Alien* (cowritten by O'Bannon); he originally retained the cold war subplot in his screenplay, at that time entitled *C.L.A.W.* (Cybernetic Lethal Autonomous Weapon). Producer Charles Fries acquired the script and, in the early 1980s, very nearly went into production with Arnold Schwarzenegger in the lead role—but the actor decided to go with another script about robot war and threatened human extinction, *The Terminator*. *C.L.A.W.* was shelved, though Fries said at the time that the loss of Schwarzenegger was only a temporary setback. The opportunity remained to make the film as a low budget picture, but Fries refused all offers, saying that the material deserved an A-level production—even if it had to wait a decade or two before the opportunity arrived.

In the years that followed, *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and the fall of the "evil empire" rendered Dick's take on the cold war an outdated relic; in 1990, Fries commissioned minor alterations to O'Bannon's script. Instead of a ruined Earth, the action was moved to a mining planet. Instead of commies and Americans, the conflict is a "class war" between colonial mine workers and and a mining consortium (thus echoing some themes of O'Bannon's script for *Alien*).

At the center of the script, however, the story remains fully intact. In an introduction to "Second Variety" written for a 1977 collection, Dick said of the story that "my grand theme—who is human and who only appears (masquerades) as human?—emerges most fully. Unless we can individually and collectively be certain of the answer to this question, we face what is, in my view, the most serious problem possible. Without answering it adequately, we cannot even be certain of our own selves."

This theme, also very important in *Blade Runner* and the story it was drawn from ("Do Androids Dream of Electronic Sheep?"), was not a matter of worry to Dick because of artificial intelligence and the possibilities of the future; his concerns were not confined to hard science and its imagined futures—in fact, the "science" in Dick's science fiction primarily took the form of quasi-magical electronic gizmos.

Instead, Dick used his imagined worlds to strip his characters—and the reader—of the reassuring illusion of stability fostered by contemporary reality and expose them to the chaos of the universe at large, in the hope that some truth about the human soul would emerge. Philip Dick was himself subject, through much of his life, to vivid experiences of what seemed to be other worlds and other times, and most of Dick's later writing represents the herculean effort of a sane intellect to rationalize such unfathomable experience.

Which is not to say that *Screamers* is going to be any sort

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of heavy headtrip; "Second Variety" was written just as Dick was beginning to penetrate the science fiction pulp magazine market. The metaphysical themes that dominated his later work are securely cloaked in a violent future war scenario, allowing the possibility for the film to cross over to mainstream success as an "action" picture.

In order to make the most of *Screamers*' moderate budget, the film was shot in Montreal by a Canadian crew, a move that required Fries to abdicate the producer's role to Tom Berry of Allegro Films. Director Christian Duguay, whose most prominent work is *Million Dollar Babies*, the recent television miniseries about the Dionne Quintuplets, previously worked with Allegro on two interesting, though poorly scripted, sequels to David Cronenberg's *Scanners*.

Duguay, who is unique among directors in that he insists on doing the camera work himself, does seem to have a handle on Dick's work. "I didn't set out to make just another special effects extravaganza," he says, "because that's not what Philip K. Dick is all about. His stories have an impact because they are based on the human condition in his own time, set in uncertain futures. We see ourselves mirrored in his tales, and that often is an unpleasant and frightening sight."

And more pulp fiction heads for the small screen, as HBO plans to reproduce the success of its long-running *Tales from the Crypt* anthology series with a series of stories



Paramount Pictures has entered into an agreement for Rick Berman to produce and cowrite the next Star Trek *film, with principal photography projected to begin in 1996.*

culled from the pages of *Weird Tales*, the anthology magazine that served as the cradle of modern horror fiction and as the primary print home, during its twenty-year run, for the dark fantasy of H.P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, Clark Ashton Smith, Robert Bloch, Ray Bradbury, and countless others. A ninety-minute pilot is currently in production, with Oliver Stone, Tim Burton, and Francis Ford Coppola each directing one thirty-minute segment. The pilot's script will be adapted from three stories by the series' creators, Marc Patrick Carducci and Peter Atkins, who will also produce; it's expected that ten more episodes will go into production upon the completion of the pilot; Carducci and Atkins are already courting Clive

Continued on page 27

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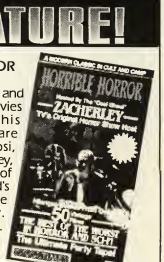
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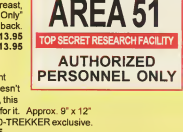


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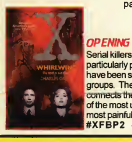
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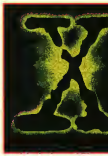
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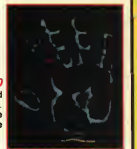




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Barker and *Frankenstein* screenwriter Frank Darabont to direct future episodes.

Last month our esteemed editor mocked my flub regarding the name of Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates (I called him David, perhaps because the Kinks song "David Watts" comes to mind whenever I think of the software zillionaire) and his talks with Steven Spielberg. Nevertheless, my predictive powers have proved once again to be quite correct. Paul Allen, who is Bill/David's partner in Microsoft, has become the largest principal investor in Dreamworks SKG, to the tune of $500 million. Spielberg has announced that all his future interactive projects will be created in-house—making an orphan of Knowledge Adventure, a software outfit that counted its relationship with Spielberg as a primary asset. Remarkably, business and computer trade magazines have, as yet, failed to note what a media juggernaut is likely to emerge from this alliance, probably because Microsoft Network and Dreamworks SKG so far exist only on paper. Mark my words, these guys are going to own a large chunk of cyberspace.

Back in the real world, things are going especially well for Dreamworks, as the acquisition of Universal Studios by Canada's Seagram Corporation opens the doors for an unprecedented level of cooperation between major studios. Spielberg needs for Universal to allow him to move several Amblin'/Universal projects to Dreamworks; in exchange, he's ready to commit foreign distribution rights for the first Dreamworks projects to Universal. It's expected that Dreamworks will lease studio facilities on the Universal lot, until they've built their own facilities. It's also expected that some large-budget projects will be cooperative efforts, bearing the logos of both studios. By the time you read this, the first Dreamworks projects will have been announced; *Variety* predicts an animated Biblical epic on the life and times of Moses to be among the goodies.

Speaking of exciting media alliances, Disney has sealed a deal that will bring its programming into more than 50 million U.S. homes, starting as early as late 1996. The "baby bell" phone companies Ameritech, BellSouth, and Southwestern Bell are putting up $500 million in start-up money for a partnership firm, in which Disney will provide the content and the telephone companies will provide delivery services. The business trades speculate that this means Goofy will be delivering the late sports scores. But, put together with last month's report on Disney's experiments in virtual reality, the eventualities that come to mind are stunning, exciting, and even scary (read Neal Stephenson's novel *Snowcrash*).

Another Disney alliance is about to bear fruit: *Toy Story*, the first full-length computer-animated feature, is nearing completion at the Pixar Studios in Marin County. Director John Lasseter and a crew of technical magicians headed by Eben Ostby, William Reeves



Miramax plans to film a sequel to The Crow *(starring the late Brandon Lee, above).*

and Craig Good were previously responsible for the first computer-animated short to snag an Oscar, *Tin Toy*. Rasterized from a Joss (*Aliens 4*) Whedon script, *Toy Story* will feature the voices of Tim Allen, Tom Hanks, and Don Rickles. The film should be ready for Christmastime release—and so will *James and the Giant Peach*, the puppet-animated follow-up to *The Nightmare before Christmas* from director Henry Selick and executive producer Tim Burton.

Spike Jonze, the video director of eye-catching clips for the likes of Ween, Weezer, and the Beastie Boys, will direct TriStar Pictures' adaptation of *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, Crockett Johnson's children's book about a little boy who escapes reality by drawing his fantasies. Illustrator Maurice Sendak will head the character design team for the $25 million live-action/animated feature. Another mix of live action and animation will be on view in *Joe's Apartment*, written and directed by John Payson. The Geffen Pictures feature is an expansion of Payson's three-minute short about a guy with a singing, dancing cockroach problem, widely seen on MTV. Jerry O'Connell of *Sliders* stars.

Fox Children's Network is developing *Goosebumps*, based on R. L. Stine's children's book series, as a weekly anthology show for the fall—like a "*Twilight Zone* for teeny boppers." Stine's first book for adults, *Superstitious*, is being published by Brandon Tartikoff's new publishing company, Tartikoff Books, this fall, and Miramax is considering adapting that book to the big screen. The story concerns a college professor possessed by demons.

Miramax has reportedly decided to shoot a sequel to *The Crow* despite worries that such a move might tick off fans of the original film's star, the late Brandon Lee. The new film will star French actor Vincent Perez, in place of Lee who was accidentally killed during the filming of the original. Mirimax went shopping for other comics properties, and the

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folks at TeknoComics must have seen them coming. Miramax bought options on *Mickey Spillane's Mike Danger*, *Neil Gaiman's Mr. Hero*, and *Gene Roddenberry's Lost Universe*. Miramax also will launch a joint imprint with the comics firm that will sort of "field test" screenwriters' film concepts in comic book form before actually making a film.

Returning to high-tech, Renny Harlin is developing *Exit Zero* for New Line Cinema; the Kurt Wimmer screenplay is set in a near-future where the global Internet has become an omnipresent part of human life. In the screenplay's rather plausible scenario, an experiment in artificial intelligence worms its way out onto the net—and the Internet becomes conscious, developing its own sinister plans for mankind. Screenwriter Wimmer is also at work on an adaptation of Michael Crichton's novel *Sphere* for Warner Brothers.

Sam Raimi (*Evil Dead, Darkman*) has signed to direct *The Damocles Network*, from a script by John Pogue. The screenplay concerns a government operative who becomes aware of an assassination conspiracy deployed to control the functionings of the U.S. government and finds himself a hunted man. Johnny Depp, now shooting the action picture *Nick of Time* for Paramount, is being courted for the lead role.

The proliferation of syndicated and cable science fiction series, and MGM's success with the Showtime *Outer Limits* series, has inspired the studio to dust off Tobe Hooper's *Poltergeist* as a series springboard, destined for cable and foreign sales.

Pamela Anderson will star in the big screen version of the Dark Horse Comic book, *Barb Wire*, for Gramercy Pictures. Adam Rifkin will direct on location in Los Angeles. Anderson plays a bounty hunter and nightclub owner in the time of a post-apocalyptic civil war. Release is planned for early 1996, to be timed to the release of an interactive CD-ROM version that will put you in complete control of Pamela Anderson (within limits, of course).

Making noise at this year's Cannes Film Festival is a German film scheduled for screening as part of the exclusive "Critic's Week" screen program; director Anthony Waller's *Mute Witness* is described by European critics as a combination of De Palma's *Scarface* and Tobe Hooper's *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Jean Roy, who curates Cannes' series of critics' screenings, calls the German film " the most spectacular film of that genre I've seen in the last ten years." Pretty scary! Also on the scary side, Anthony Hopkins will star in *The Diary of Jack the Ripper*, based on the diaries of suspected ripper James Maybrick, and scheduled for production as soon as Hopkins and director William Friedkin (*The Exorcist*) have carried out their present commitments. And scarier still, Twentieth Century Fox is developing *Hellraiser: Virtual Hell*, a CD-ROM "environment" drawn from the endless series of Clive Barker films.

Sean Connery ducked out of the lead role

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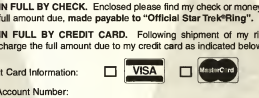
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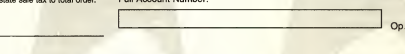
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H.G. Wells' novel The Island of Lost Souls *is being filmed for the third time as* The Island of Dr. Moreau, *starring Marlon Brando and Ron Perlman. Previous films were made in 1932, starring Bela Lugosi and Charles Laughton, and in 1977 (above), with Burt Lancaster and Michael York.*

in *Assassins*, to be replaced by Sylvester Stallone. Antonio Banderas costars as a young assassin out to topple the more experienced but older, and perhaps slower, Sly. During a break in shooting, Stallone told an Associated Press reporter, "It's deep.... It's a very cerebral movie, an existential action film.... You THINK it goes boom, but it doesn't. Screenplay by Sartre. Dialogue by Camus."

Spurious rumors of a nuclear disaster in Slovakia swept Poland for two days in April, fueled by advertising for the movie *Outbreak*. According to a Reuters news report, the rumors began when the theater showing the movie sent a truck through Lodz with a public address system, warning residents of danger, telling them to go home and carefully shut all windows. Not everybody heard the end of the message, which said the only salvation was to buy tickets for the movie's première.

Pins and Needles, a comedy series combining animation and live action, is in development at Fox. The show concerns a mad scientist who lives in a Victorian house where the laws of physics do not apply. The show's creator is Henry Selick, director of *Nightmare before Christmas*.

Alien Nation: Body and Soul, a second TV movie, is in development for next season on Fox. Matt Sikes (Gary Graham), a human cop, and his Newcomers' partner, George Francisco (Eric Pierpoint), uncover a devastating secret about the Newcomers' arrival on Earth. Fox is also considering a telefilm based on the classic 1960s science fiction series *The Invaders*. C. Thomas Howell will star in *The Kindred*, a pilot in preparation for Fox. The film, and the series that may follow, will concern an underground network of vampires in modern-day San Francisco. *The Munsters* will also be a Fox TV movie, with an all-new cast. John Landis will be executive producer.

James Cameron and Arnold Schwarzenegger are arranging their schedules to collaborate on the creation of *The Terminator* 3-D attraction at Universal Studios, Los Angeles.

Jurassic Park screenwriter David Koepp will direct *The Trigger Effect* for Universal. It's his directorial debut, and we believe it's a science fiction film. Ron Perlman, a Sci-Fi Channel staple in the second title role of *Beauty and the Beast*, signed to play the Sayer of the Law, the mutated spiritual leader of Dr. Moreau's twisted creations in *The Island of Dr. Moreau*, based upon H.G. Welles classic *Island of Lost Souls*. Notwithstanding the recent tragedies that have struck the film's star, Marlon Brando, production is expected to start this August in Australia.

TriStar Pictures has acquired the film rights to Image Comics' *Prophet* after hearing a pitch from creator and illustrator Rob Liefeld. "In the comic book realm, *Prophet* is on a par with *Batman*," the young Liefeld told *Variety*. "Certainly his sales are comparable. But he's more like a science fiction superhero rather than a classic, caped crusader." It's expected that the storyline will be drawn from the first year of comic book stories, concerning an experimental supersoldier. Liefeld currently has two other film projects in development, *Doom IV* for Amblin Entertainment and *The Mark* for Tom Cruise's production company.

And Chinese scientist Chen Zhangliang has successfully extracted dinosaur DNA from a dinosaur egg that had remained intact for countless years until it was dropped by a collector; a "cottony" substance inside the egg proved to contain the dino DNA. But Chen says, "This is nothing like *Jurassic Park*. Baby dinosaurs are not going to be running down Tiananmen Square." Well, sure—not if they know what's good for them. □

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The *Star Blazers* Revival; *Yamato* is Forever!

BY ROBERT MARTIN & EMRU TOWNSEND

IN ORDER TO WRITE AUTHORITATIVELY about any aspect of the saga of *Space Battleship Yamato* (better known in the U.S. as *Star Blazers*), you have to have some understanding of the entire saga; and even then, it can be very confusing, for in the world of Yamato, created in the late '70s by Reiji Matsumoto and Yoshinobu Nishizaki, a character can die and then show up years later, perfectly healthy and sharing an otherwise empty planet with its still-ruling queen. Earth can be rendered a scorched, lifeless cinder, and be fully rehabilitated in what seems a matter of months. The most despicable enemy will prove to have a noble core—and, after trying hard to enslave Earth, may well fight our next battle side-by-side with us. And, while the backbone of the series concerns hot-headed men of war who are liable to blow up their own home planet in a fit of anger, the women of the series seem all to be half-angel, possessing secret powers and a habit of saving Earth and the crew of *Yamato* from total destruction. All very confusing but, like *Babylon 5*, the more of it you see, the more it starts to make sense.



In the year 2202, the Dark Empire invades Earth and threatens to destroy the planet if the hidden space battleship Yamato *is not surrendered in* Be Forever Yamato.

One way to solve this problem is to mortgage the house and buy the whole eighteen-volume collection of the *Star Blazers* television show, including all thirty-nine episodes of the American syndicated package—but you may still find yourself confused, as the Japanese series ran for seventy-seven episodes. An easier way to get a mega-dose of *Yamato* is via the two *Yamato* feature films recently released by Voyager Entertainment—an event *Star Blazers* fans have anticipated for over a decade—***Space Battleship Yamato: The New Voyage*** and ***Be Forever Yamato.***

The New Voyage was the first *Yamato* feature with a plot entirely separate from the television series (*Space Battleship Yamato* was edited down from pieces of the first season, and *In the Name of Love* was first made as a feature and then broadly expanded into the television show's second season). The saga begins with an old enemy, Desler ("Desslok" in the dubbed TV series), now a friend to the *Yamato* and to Earth, leading his space fleet back home to Planet Gamilus. Upon his arrival, he finds a group of aliens from the Dark Galaxy Empire mining his planet, plunging very deeply into her with some very rude-looking machines. Naturally, he must blast them off of his beloved home. Unfortunately, when the mining ship is obliterated, the excess energy from the blast finds its way to the center of the planet and—kabloom! no more planet. Of course, this means war.

Meanwhile, Susumu Kodai (a k a Derek Wildstar) and his girlfriend from outer space, Sasha (Astra), have taken command of a refurbished *Yamato*, with a brand new crew. As the intergalactic war is shaping up, Kodai is busily beating some sense into the heads of his new recruits.

Unfortunately, Planet Gamilus does not meet its fate alone; it's part of a two-planet system, and its twin, Iskandar, is spun out of its normal orbit, becoming a runaway planet. Of course, Iskandar just happens to be the planet where Mamoru Kodai (Alex Wildstar, Derek/Susumu's brother) lives with the planet's queen, Stasha (Astra/Sasha's sister). To complicate matters further, Desler is also in love with Stasha. And the Dark Empire, cheated out of the rare elements they need for their campaigns of conquest, are now hell-bent to get hold of Iskandar, the only other planet to hold these rare (and apparently very unstable) elements.

Be Forever Yamato revives the scenario of battle with the Dark Empire, but on a much grander level, as the fiends set their sights on Earth conquest. *BFY* was made expressly for theatrical release in Japan, and a great deal more work went into its animation; though movements are still, in *anime* style, quite unfluid, *BFY* is loaded with effects animation, air-brush effects, and a much higher level of pictorial detail than any previous *Yamato*. If you want to try only one *Yamato* on for size, *BFY* is the best *Yamato* yet; but to fully appreciate the sentimental saga of the brothers Kodai and their alien mates, the two films

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should be seen in sequence. And one more long overdue Yamato feature, *The Final Battle*, is in the pipeline for release this year.

Especially welcome is the news that Final Battle will not be so final. The first volume of an "Original Animated Video" series, *Yamato 2520*, with all-new characters in a future co-designed by American futurist Syd Mead, is out in Japan, with a U.S. release on the way; and Yamato co-creator Yoshinobu Nishizaki is teaming with Makoto Kobayashi (*Giant Robo* animator) to create *Space Battleship Yamato: Rebirth*, featuring an older Captain Kodai. Computer users can keep up with Yamato developments—including news about a new *Star Blazers* magazine—by sending a request for information to studiogo@aol.com.

Project A-ko (Central Park Media) has an opening which features not one, but two recognizable SF cliches—one from an American comic book, the other a staple of Japanese SF *anime*. An unknown object crashes into the Earth, bearing with it an infant passenger... only instead of landing in Smallville, it screams right into the second cliché by crashing into a city, destroying it in a blast of heat and light. Cut to sixteen years later, in the rebuilt Graviton City. Eiko Magami is racing to school so quickly that her friend Shiko Kotobuki is dragged airborne behind her. Little does she know that she will soon battle giant robots created by her teenage rival.

And that's really what *Project A-ko* is all about. On one level, it's a moderately wacky tale of a high school rivalry and an alien invasion. But what makes the movie twice as funny is the amount of takeoffs based on popular *anime* movies and TV shows, the "cameos" and swipes of characters from other productions, and the way it cheerfully plays with time-worn clichés. Even the title is a play on another movie (*Project A*, a Jackie Chan film.)

The cast of this movie is inexplicably 99 percent female, and centers around three girls in particular: Eiko, Biko, and Shiko, more commonly referred to A-ko, B-ko, and C-ko ("ko" being a suffix denoting young girls). A-ko, the redhead, has extraordinary super-strength; B-ko has blue hair and is possessed of fiendish genius; C-ko is blonde, excessively cute, and generally comes across as having the intelligence of a clam.

A-ko and C-ko are the best of friends. B-ko, however, wants C-ko to herself, even if she has to kill A-ko to do it. Every day before school, she tries to defeat A-ko with a new, insane plan. Meanwhile, in space, a mysterious alien ship has been approaching Earth, their invasion coinciding with the day that A-ko and B-ko's rivalry culminates in a battle royale.



Project A-ko *includes spoofs of many anime clichés.*

Part of *Project A-ko*'s charm is that it expects a certain familiarity with Japanese animation from the viewer. While the *anime* neophyte can watch the movie and get a good laugh out of it, those in the know can point and chuckle at some of the general clichés being spoofed—and it's handled skillfully enough that those new to *anime* won't be left scratching their heads. The ripoffs and sendups of *Fist of the North Star*, *Captain Harlock*, and *Harmagedon* are funny enough to stand on their own, but when you know a little about the origin of the jokes, they become even funnier.

For example, *Captain Harlock* is a classic *anime* character who piloted the starship *Arcadia* through space. One of Harlock's trademarks was that he was always casually sipping wine, even during a tense situation on the ship. This, of course, made him amazingly cool. In *A-ko*, the Harlock-like captain, who commands an *Arcadia*-like ship, also clings to that glass of wine, but for a different reason—she's an alcoholic.

Cute in-jokes like that make *Project A-ko* all the more enjoyable for the budding *anime* fan: one can come back to it repeatedly, catching a new joke every time.

Macross Plus (Manga Entertainment): Sequels and adaptations are tricky; a certain balance needs to be maintained—enough familiar elements need to be retained to satisfy of fans of the originals, but there also has to be a certain amount of freshness and new ideas, to keep them from being just rehashes


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of the same old stories. Probably one of the best examples of a successful sequel is *The Empire Strikes Back*; in many ways it was different from *Star Wars*, but the story's backdrop and the relationship between the characters pretty much remained the same.

The classic 1982 *anime* TV series *Super-Dimensional Fortress Macross* (known in the West as the first part of the *Robotech* trilogy) has had several sequels and adaptations. The first two, released shortly after the series itself, constitute the "classic" sequels. These are the *Macross: Do You Remember Love?* movie adaptation of 1984 (released in North America minus twenty-six minutes of footage as *Clash of the Bionoids*), and the *Macross: Flashback 2012* music video tribute. After a lull came the 1993 production of the *Macross II* OAVs (original animation videos) direct-to-video releases.

Tatsunoko, the producers of the original series, started a *Macross* revival in 1994, with productions spanning three media. These are the *Macross Plus* OAVs, the *Macross 7* television series, and an upcoming live-action movie.

Manga Entertainment has started releasing a translated version of the *Macross Plus* OAVs, easily one of the best spinoffs within the *Macross* universe. Set in the year 2040, it bears with it certain *Macross* essentials: a love triangle, hotshot fighter pilots, an outrageously popular idol singer (the Japanese equivalent to such teen-fluff pop-music stars as New Kids on the Block), and transforming fighter planes/giant robots doing unbelievable things in battle.

The outward similarities end there. Judging from the first episode, the series won't be taking place in space, and won't have a vast, galaxy-spanning war as a backdrop. However, *Macross*' strength has always been in its characters and the tension between them, and *Macross Plus* has that in spades. Isamu Dyson is a highly skilled fighter pilot whose recklessness gets him banished to his home planet, Eden. There, he is to take part in the testing of an experimental Valkyrie fighter plane. As luck would have it, his rival test pilot is Gold Bowman, once an old friend but now a nearly mortal enemy. The woman who came between them, Myung Fung Lone, is now the producer for Sharon Apple, the system's hottest music star. Of course, her tour has brought her to Eden. (Soap opera is also an integral part of the *Macross* tradition.)

Following the *Macross* rules, *Macross Plus* features stunning animation and visuals, with just the right blend of action and story to keep us entertained and intrigued. The English dubbing is seamless; unlike many other translated *anime*, the dialogue flows smoothly (though Myung could show some more emotion), and there are none of the hallmark grunts and unnatural pauses that have been used to fit English dialogue to Japanese mouth movements. *Macross Plus* is just a class act all around. But then, that's what we've come to expect. □

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Katsuhiro Otomo's compelling tale of post-apocalyptic struggle comes to the Sci-Fi Channel

AKIRA: Anime Comes of Age

BY EMRU TOWNSEND



Photos: Streamline Pictures, ©1989 Akira Committee

TOKYO, REBORN AFTER THE APOCALYPSE. Children with the powers of gods. Government experiments gone awry. Dueling motorcycle gangs in the decaying urban sprawl. None of these ideas is new, but when Katsuhiro Otomo's *Akira* hit the pages of Japan's *Weekly Young Magazine* in 1982, he imparted his own particular spin to these elements, weaving a multilayered tapestry that has not only won him acclaim in Japan, but in Europe and North America as well.

Katsuhiro Otomo's first *manga* (Japanese comic) work was *Gun Report* (1973), an adaptation of Prosper Merimee's *Mateo Falcone*. Since then, he's been busy in the *manga* and *anime* (Japanese animation) industries, producing such work as the award-winning *Domu* (published in an English-language edition by Dark Horse), and storyboarding the opening and closing segments of *Robot Carnival*, Japan's cybernetic successor to *Fantasia*. He has also done commercial work in Japan for such clients as Honda and Canon.

Japan's *manga* industry is immense; while the heavy-hitters in the North American comic-book market are just starting to sell millions of copies of some popular titles, Japan's *manga* companies have been regularly selling millions of weekly black-and-white volumes the size of small telephone books for decades. The diversity of the medium is staggering, with topics ranging from adventure to cooking to badminton. The artistic range is similarly wide, from the child-like simplicity of *Tanuka-kun*, to the excessively detailed *Cyber Blue*.

Even amid this veritable sea of *manga*, *Akira* stood out. Set in "Neo-Tokyo" thirty years after 'World War III,' the story revolves around the title character, a mysterious figure who is almost never seen. Our main characters are caught up in the struggle to gain and control the fantastic power of Akira. These are Kaneda, fifteen-year-old leader of the Capsules, a biker gang; Tetsuo, his childhood buddy, whose psychic powers are awakened; Kei and Ryu, members of a group try-



OPPOSITE: As the picture opens, Yamagata (left) and Kaneda are two bikers preparing for gang warfare, unaware that they will soon be caught up in a web of power and deceit. Kaneda, one of the principal characters in **Akira**, *towers over Neo-Tokyo.*

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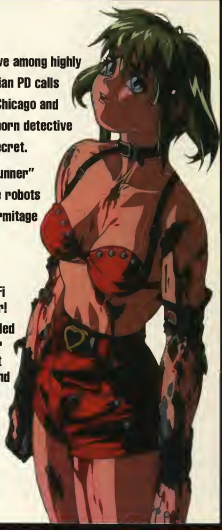
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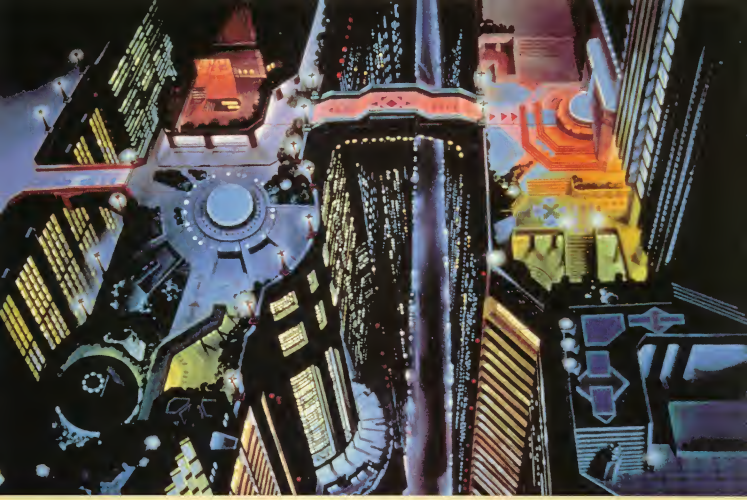
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TOP: A nighttime panorama of the gleaming city, Neo-Tokyo. ABOVE: Tetsuo engages in psychic battle. RIGHT: In a page from issue #12 of the Akira manga, *published in the U.S. by Marvel, Tetsuo receives maiming punishment from an unseen power in the skies.*

ing to find the other psychic kids and overthrow the government; the Colonel, the military leader who is perfectly willing to sacrifice hundreds of lives to keep Akira's power from being unleashed; and Kiyoko, Takashi, and Masaru—numbers 25, 26, and 27—three products of a secret government program that developed and exploited psychic powers in children. The three are forty years old but still have the bodies of young children.

Otomo's ambition with *Akira* was to create a 1,800-page story, to be compiled into five books upon completion. In the actual work, the page count came to 2,200, in six volumes, five of which have been published in English by Marvel Comics. Not satisfied with the ending, Otomo refused to allow the final section of his saga to be published in the United States until a rewrite was done; Marvel tells us it is, at last, ready for publication; issues numbered 34 through 38 of *Akira* will arrive at well-stocked comics shops on a monthly basis through the rest of 1995, beginning August 8th.

Two things set *Akira* apart from other *manga*. The first is Otomo's sense of scale. Seeing the destruction of Tokyo in the first few pages is a bit of a cliché, but unlike most *manga* storytellers, Otomo lets the shock of the nuclear explosion set the pace, and doesn't let up until the reader is begging for mercy.

The second is Otomo's successful translation of cinematic technique to the printed page. While this is hardly uncommon in *manga*, most only use this style for select parts of the story. *Akira* manages to preserve the cinematic feel and pacing throughout the entire series; flipping through *Akira*'s pages, one experiences the curious sensation of reading a movie. It was only natural, then, for *Akira* to be adapted into an animated feature, released in 1988.

The Sci-Fi Channel will present *Akira* on Saturday, August 19 at 8 p.m. and midnight, in letterboxed editions. Repeat showings are scheduled on Sunday, August 20 at 3 p.m. and Saturday, August 26 at 4 p.m.

In making the transition from the printed page to the large screen, *Akira* received extra special treatment. Eight of Japan's major media and entertainment corporations joined forces to create the Akira Production Committee, who in turn assembled no less than thirty-one animation studios to create

Continued on page 74

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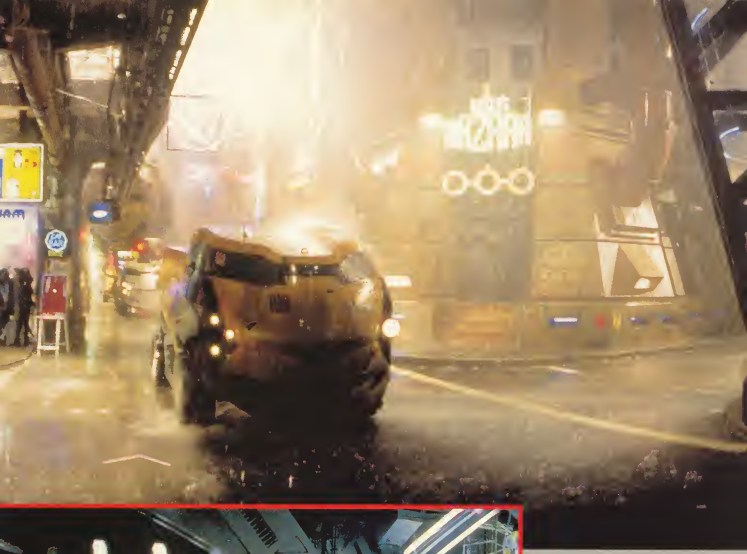


BUILDING a World of DREDD

Exclusive interviews with Director Danny Cannon and production designer Nigel Phelps.

BY BERTHE ROEGGER

A RECENT NATIONAL POLL REVEALED that a majority of Americans are now ready to trade some of their civil liberties away in exchange for a greater sense of safety. While we can hope that these results were a temporary aberration, a panic reaction to the tragic deaths in Oklahoma City, no news report could more aptly precede the arrival in theaters nationwide of *Judge Dredd*, adapted from a British comic's biting take on violence and justice in America. And, while it may seem absurd to bring up such heavy matters in regard to "yet another sci-fi action $70 million piece-of-fluff Sylvester Stallone vehicle," as other writers have characterized the film, director Danny Cannon seems determined to have his film taken more seriously.





"For me to go to Hollywood in order to make a second movie [his first was *Young Americans*], it had to be important," Cannon says. "It had to mean a lot to me, so I could spend the amount of time that I wanted to prepare for it. There were a lot of other things around that I could have done and, quite frankly, I didn't feel qualified for them. So it was quite a surprise to be able to say I feel more qualified to do this one. It has less to do with the logistics or the budget than with the fact that, if you commit two years of your life to something, then you have to live it—it has to be everything to you."

It's pretty remarkable that this very expensive film is being entrusted to Cannon, twenty-five years old at the time he first met with the film's producers (now twenty-seven and *still* working on the mammoth film), and whose first film, *Young Americans* was made for less than 1 percent of *Dredd*'s budget and was never released theatrically in the U.S. But Cannon claims to see nothing unique in the situation. "Whatever the budget, the job is the same, really," he says. "You go ahead, telling the story and designing the film and creating the character, giving the film a life and a reality unto itself. That's your job. It's not my fault these films cost this much money—we're lucky we had it to spend, really.

"I'd grown up with *Judge Dredd*; started reading it when I was ten. I stopped reading it when I was about sixteen, but the atmosphere and those characters stayed with me. I just felt this was a subject that I knew very well and could live and breath, so I decided to make the pitch to Andy Vajna." Executive producer Vajna, who ruled Carolco





along with partner Mario Kassar through the '80s, producing such films as *First Blood* and *Total Recall*, sold his interest in Carolco long before its current troubles and founded Cinergi Productions, which, with *Die Hard with a Vengeance* and *Judge Dredd*, will likely be responsible for a large share of this summer's blockbuster revenues.

"I had an idea of where I would like to take *Judge Dredd*; they were ready to go, but they weren't totally happy with the screenplay, so I pitched them for about three weeks—I hadn't read the screenplay because I knew the movie I wanted to make; instead, I pitched the movie I wanted to make. Later, I read the draft that they'd been basing this on, and we went about rewriting everything, to get this emotional, passionate, epic quality.

"The only way to do that was to visualize; myself and Nigel Phelps and the illustrators sat for five months as we rewrote the screenplay, visualizing everything on paper. It's very difficult to convey with words just what a movie will be like, it's hard to take on trust. So you draw everything and say, 'Do you get it?' So the visual is what does it. That's what this movie's about, telling the story through pictures."

Judge Dredd's production designer was aptly chosen; Nigel Phelps had been art director of the first *Batman* film, so his experience in synthesizing an entire world from a comics page filtered through a director's vision is unrivaled; and he worked with Kubrick on *Full Metal Jacket* (an experience he indicates as being part honor, part thrill and all nightmare). Phelps was approached by producer Ed Pressman and by Cannon in the summer of 1993; immediately upon his acceptance, the marathon visualization sessions began, in tandem with revisions to remold the script to Cannon's vision of *Dredd*. Work in Los Angeles proceeded from August to December, then resumed at Shepperton Studios in Middlesex, England, until shooting commenced in June of 1994.

OPPOSITE ABOVE: The mean streets of Mega City One. BELOW: Production designer Nigel Phelps on one of Dredd's more elaborate sets. ABOVE: Stallone in the uniform that, Phelps says, was one aspect in which the filmmakers made a special effort to achieve a close match to the comic book version.

"There were obviously a lot of lessons we learned on *Batman*," Phelps says, "so there were a lot of missteps that we were able to avoid, especially in terms of setting things up, so that we'd have a lot more latitude in terms of how a given scene might be shot, for instance. We were also able to work, at Shepperton, with a lot of the same crew from the first *Batman*, so there was a great deal of experience to draw upon there.

"One large difference for this was that when we did *Batman*, there was no digital technology involved—every shot where you saw the top of a set or a flying vehicle, that was all miniatures and matte paintings. When we started on



ABOVE: Max Von Sydow (from the film Flash Gordon*), as former chief Judge Fargo. LEFT: Jurgen Prochnow, star of* Das Boot*, plays the corrupt Judge Griffin.*

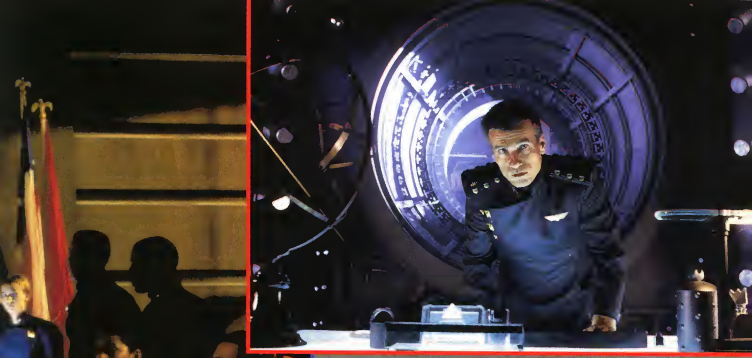
Judge Dredd, things had gotten to a point where we could decide to do all of that with miniatures instead of mattes, and marry the miniatures to the live action digitally.

Phelps says that he approached the creation of Mega City One with both the first *Batman* and *Blade Runner* in mind, "because those are the comparisons that are inevitably going to be made. Though I didn't work on *Blade Runner*, I'm very familiar with it—for this type of set design, it's useful to know what sort of references you definitely want to avoid, and what untouched areas there remain that you want to explore. I think what we've done, in getting *Judge Dredd*'s world on screen, will be quite another thing from either of those two films—even allowing that *Blade Runner* has pretty much trademarked the rainy, nighttime, neon-lit city street, and you can't entirely get away from that."

In keeping with Cannon's effort to tell the story visually, the structure of Mega City One—layered like an onion, one that's rotten at its core—itself tells the viewer something of the society that lives within it. "The opening shot in the film is totally a designed shot," says Phelps, "that Danny planned as the viewer's introduction to this world, a point of view shot where you are flying over Mega City One, and it's very architecturally grand, very cool and futuristic, just to provoke that reaction, ah, cool—I'd love to go there. The shot continues as you fly over the buildings, and then it starts descending into the city, entering it more and more deeply, and the architecture starts to change so, instead of all the cool stuff, you begin entering this other, darker, more aggressive world that's really pretty horrible. Andy Vajna, especially, was very adamant that the city shouldn't be all dark and dreary and repressive, that it have this very cool upper part to it, with all the theaters, restaurants and what have you, and the crappier environment below.

"To be sure that we would give the film a cohesive look, we felt that the architecture was the first thing to attack to get those layers of society, and it was decided to make those upper layers very reflective, so you have the skyway traffic reflected in them, creating this shining utopia; as you get lower and lower, they not only get dirtier but more tarnished and less reflective by stages."

Such sequences were accomplished by using miniatures built to a variety of different scales, all digitally composited into a seamless whole. In addition, the models were meticulously reproduced in the computers of Mass. Illusion,



Cinergi's Massachusetts-based effects house, so that they could be digitally enhanced with building reflections, vehicles, atmosphere, and textures. These digital sets created in Massachusetts were then blended with the actual filmed miniatures, leaving the filmmakers in England in full physical control of the way their models were lit. The other route, of fully digital sets, can sometimes work perfectly—but it takes hours of high-resolution rendering to correct small errors in digital output.

"This way we were getting the best of both worlds. With pure miniatures, you're always running into certain problems of scale—you can never make lights small enough, and you can't do neon on that small scale, but computers can do that. And we were able to light the miniatures exactly as we needed.

While digital effects have put us on the threshold of an era when anything might be possible in film, Phelps believes that we are not quite over that threshold yet. As he explains it, *Jurassic Park* was a breakthrough, but even if you have a hundred dinosaurs stampeding through the frame, you are still only dealing with one set of reflective and surface properties for the reptile's skin. If you throw in a somewhat different dinosaur species, you have to throw in a slightly different set of calculations. But if you decide to have a computer-rendered dark world, as in the same scene, you have an entirely different problem of surfaces and reflections that has to be solved virtually from scratch.

"If you want to do a city," says Phelps, "you have all these different entities involved, hundreds of different surfaces, and that becomes a problem. And there are some things that just can't be convincingly created within a computer as yet—for instance, human hair." Which explains why all the characters in *Reboot* look like they're wearing weird helmets.

But digital technology did have a major hand in bringing the skies of Mega City One to life. Production illustrator Julian Caldow did about forty designs for every sort of vehicle—freighters, limousines, city buses, fire engines—all designed to fly through the city's skies. "All of those are purely digital," says Phelps. "No models were built of those at all—except for one of them, which we had to build only because we needed to blow it up."

Rolling vehicles had to be a bit more substantial, however, and line producer Beau Marks arranged for the Land Rover Corporation to provide a fleet of custom vehicles for the film.

Phelps says that the items that drew the most scrutiny from the young director were the items most personal to the central character: the Lawmasters, the massive motorbikes that serve as stallions for the judicial cadre (for the movie, these bikes were enhanced with the power of flight in order to make maximum use of the city's layered structure); the Lawgiver, the standard-issue weapon that is coded to each judge's DNA so it can't be stolen and used by the "scum element," and voice-activated for selection from a wide variety of ammunition; and, of course, the judge uniform.

"Some of those things were the most fun to deal with," Cannon agrees. "When you're creating a whole world and you're worrying about sidewalks and buildings and shops and things like that, the fun we had was in giving these judges the ultimate in no-expense-spared gadgetry."

We asked Phelps whether the design team made frequent reference to the comic in resolving design problems. "Not really," he says. "The comic book was so prevalent in Danny's mind that we didn't feel a need to go study the comic book. Except the one thing we did try very much to lift from the comic book was the Judge's uniform. There were a couple of times we thought of departing from it with something more stripped-down and more practical for





ABOVE: "Pa Angel" and the Angel gang are typical residents of the "Cursed Earth"—elements too lawless to remain in Mega City One. OPPOSITE: Dredd, stripped of his authority, is escorted from court in ignominious defeat.

combat. We thought we would just have him wear the full uniform at trial. But any time you remove those shoulder pieces, you lose that feeling of the Roman Centurian that is pretty essential to the character."

In its transition from comic book to screen, the helmet lost some of its bell-shape in favor of a model that more closely follows the shape of the wearer's head, and it acquired jutting extensions following the jaw line. "We wanted it to fit around the face more, because if we'd followed the design of the comic book, it would be rattling around and likely falling off the head now and then," says Phelps. For the sake of design simplicity, the cross that appears on the uniform's faceplate was also dropped, replaced by a simple squared-off bridge piece for another hint of centurion styling.

Speaking of the face-covering helmet, longtime fans of Dredd know that he has never shown his face in the comic book, and some are miffed that the presence of a name actor in the role demanded that the helmet be removed at some point in the film.

"He wears it through a large part of the film, and Sly had no problem with that." says Cannon. "If you're going to tell the story of a hero, you've got to see the man under the mask, otherwise it's likely to get boring after fifteen minutes.

"When we were casting, there were two ways we could have gone; we could have had a nobody in the role, or we could cast an icon, which I feel works ten times better. Sly's the best of 'em as far as I'm concerned. He's had a roller coaster career of ups and downs, and he's proven himself to be very much a survivor. He turned up on the set very much in character and, when dressed as Dredd, this guy had an impact on each scene, and an impact within the room, that was very valuable.

"What was always there very much in Sly is the enormous confidence and arrogance of Dredd. Here is the top cop of this chaotic society, the one all the other cops look up to, as somebody who's made a difference on the street—war is hell and hell is home to Dredd. Sly very much understood that.

"My job was to find the point in the movie in which we tear that out—that part of his understanding—and break down the character. Not only does he have to find out that the system he's served to the utmost is corrupt and corrupting, but he has to find what his role has been within that—why that has happened. Then he finds out who he is. Then he finds out why he was that way. That's the emotional quality of this film, the passionate quality of it. And everybody in this movie—and it's a fantastic cast—is playing that to the hilt with very earnest conviction."

The two reasons that I find this movie special are because this is not a movie we've seen before, and this is not a world we've seen before. We've created a different reality here. And though it is a different world, a lot of it very recognizable from whatever's going wrong in our own world, and what's gone wrong throughout our own history. This is a wild, scary world, with its own rules and its own characters. And I think that's a beautiful thing about it."

Phelps tells us that the easiest thing to design was the "Cursed Earth"—that part of Dredd's world that lies beyond the walls of Mega City One, a barren, radiation-scarred wilderness inhabited by scavengers, anarchists, and mutants. Instead of sitting down to design such a scorched-earth hell, the crew simply packed up and trekked to Iceland, where the exteriors were shot. "It was perfect," says Phelps. "Dead, black, nothing growing, just this dead volcanic landscape. It's an eerie place—quite spooky because the air is so clear you can see for miles and miles and there's



nothing, just the odd mountain cropping up here and there."

It's in the wilds of the Cursed Earth that Dredd encounters the Angel gang, Pa Angel and his boys. Phelps credits Chris Halls, hired as a conceptual illustrator, for the realization of "the Mean Machine," Pa Angel's most hot-headed son.

"Chris is a young fellow about twenty-three years old—I hate him," Phelps says. "He's a great fan of the comic—he's done the odd cover for the magazine, in fact. And once we started working together, we discovered that he could sculpt, so I set him to sculpting the ABC robot, and he did such a brilliant job that I then set him to sculpting the Lawmaster motorbike and a number of other things. He sculpted an 18-inch maquette of the "Mean Machine" character, and then he built the prosthetics for the actor to wear as well. Chris was really exceptional. He could do anything you threw at him, a great asset to the production throughout."

Cannon jokes that he was shy about working with some of the fantastic props created for the production when Stallone was on set—Stallone would frequently point at a particularly cool gadget and say, "Planet Hollywood." For his part, Phelps is pleased that some of the production's best work will be on display in the star's restaurant chain. "It's a really good thing, because otherwise it all goes into storage and, as the years go by, winds up stolen. This way, they are at least somewhere that the public can have a look at them."

At this writing, whether people will be very interested in seeing props from *Judge Dredd* is still in question, a question that will have been decided by the time you read these words, since *Dredd* will open shortly before the date this magazine reaches the nation's newsstands.

All that summer success requires, Hollywood tells us, is a roller coaster ride: a hero, some conflict, a few explosions, some fantastic sights, and an upbeat ending. But Cannon seems resolved to deliver something more. "Audiences are underestimated these days," he opines. "I think they know a good performance when they see one; they know when they believe in characters, and they know when they care about them. It's not enough to put a gag here and an explosion there and say, 'Oh, it'll do.' This movie takes itself seriously and takes you somewhere so you don't feel like you're watching a movie. You feel in jeopardy with these characters. You care about them; you care about what's happening to their world." □

SCI-FI ENTERTAINMENT



Page 42

FEATURES

38 *Akira:* Anime Comes of Age

Katsuhiro Otomo's compelling tale of post-apocalyptic struggle comes to the Sci-Fi Channel.

42 Building a World of Dredd

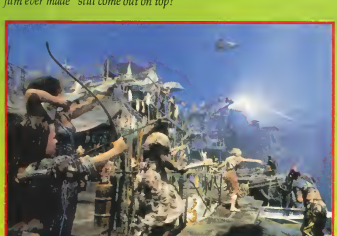
Director Danny Cannon and production designer Nigel Phelps visualize the British comic hero.

50 *Waterworld:* Box Office Wild Card

After a troubled shoot and hostile press, can "the most expensive film ever made" still come out on top?



Page 38



Page 50

56 Lost Moon

Director Ron Howard tells how the cast and crew of Apollo 13 *learned to fly.*

62 More Than Human

The director of Lawnmower Man *returns to cyberspace in* Virtuosity.

68 The Sci-Fi Worlds of Gerry Anderson

A talk with the man behind Thunderbirds, Space: 1999, *and, his latest, the intergalactic crime show* Space Precinct.

DEPARTMENTS

6 Editorial

Words of wit from our illustrious editor.

8 Letters

Readers add comments (and complaints) to our coverage of The Langoliers, Sliders *and* Batman Forever.

10 Channel News

Blast into space with Tom Hanks, Luke Skywalker, and the Sci-Fi Channel.

12 Infinite Channels

Despite Saturn and Jaguar, 3DO still wins the gaming consoles war.



Page 20

20 Future Shock

Philip K. Dick's story comes to the big screen as Screamers.

32 Videos

The Star Blazers *Revival;* Yamato *is Forever!*

75 Channel Guide

Sci-Fi Channel program schedule, plus complete movie listings.

78 Bookshelf

Horror director Dario Argento: Is he a master of shock, or merely of schlock?

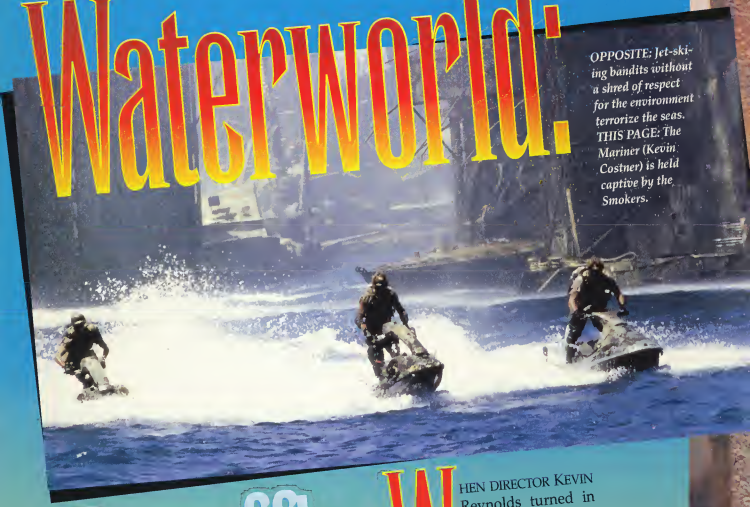
82 Quiz

Test your knowledge of Forever Knight *in this issue's quiz, Vampires are Forever.*

The Cover: *Sylvester Stallone as Judge Dredd.*

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Waterworld:



OPPOSITE: Jet-skiing bandits without a shred of respect for the environment terrorize the seas. THIS PAGE: The Mariner (Kevin Costner) is held captive by the Smokers.

Box office Wild card

After a troubled shoot and hostile press, can "the most expensive film ever made" still come out on top?

BY ED FLIXMAN

WHEN DIRECTOR KEVIN Reynolds turned in his cut of the film *Waterworld* and decided that he would rather walk away from the project than supervise another cut, it was headline news. Not that this is an uncommon happening in Hollywood—the "director's cut" is commonly taken to mean a version different from the one released; despite all the feel-good press in Hollywood trades about the "artistic rights" of film directors, only a tiny minority of filmmakers have the right of final cut; few director's cuts are regarded as too perfect to be fiddled with by the studios whose shareholders and employees are

Photos: Ben Glass. © Universal City Studios





ABOVE: The Atollers fight back as the Smokers take their campaign of terror to the skies. OPPOSITE: The Deacon (Dennis Hopper) preaches his philosophy of destruction to his assembled followers.

dependent upon success in a high-stakes, high-risk business.

So, even though such differences are not uncommon in Hollywood, this one was news, and for the same reason that everything about *Waterworld* has been news for the last year. Because *Waterworld* is "the most expensive movie ever made."

That superlative has dogged the production for months, sparking a media storm of negative publicity and surely adding to the pressure of what is, in its very nature, a pressure situation. As moviemaking costs have skyrocketed, it is inevitable that someday a few strokes of ill luck can send a film budget through the roof—and to those who remember the painful stories about the making of such films as *Jaws* and *The Deep*, the misfortunes that have befallen *Waterworld* come as no great surprise.

For David Twohy, who worked with Reynolds and producer/star Kevin Costner in developing the shooting script, the media's performance merited criticism, which he delivered via an ad placed in the Hollywood trades, questioning the motives behind all the adverse publicity. "I questioned whether it was newsworthy or not," says Twohy, "because it seems to me that it wasn't, that it was gossip, not news—and yet credible organizations were trying to make it news, like the *Wall Street Journal*. I saw the *Wall Street Journal* do a first-page article concerning itself with how Kevin Costner goes to the bathroom on the set—it just sort of rubbed me as being wrong. And a lot of people, not just the *Journal*, were taking potshots at this film, were writing slam pieces, and none of them had seen the film yet. I looked around, and nobody was standing up for the film. So I thought I would."

We can reliably assume that Twohy's sense of frustration is shared by everyone on the creative side of the film; the advance press could only intensify the pressure-cooker aspect that is intrinsic to Hollywood filmmaking. And, because this magazine is about films as entertainment—not as balance sheets—it creates unneeded obstacles to our task of conveying something of what went into the making of *Waterworld*, as many of the prin-





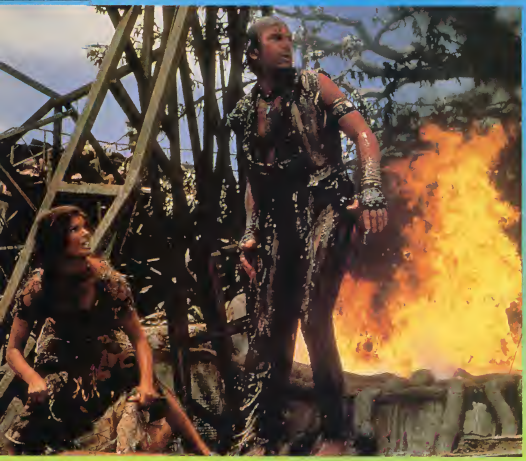
cipals of the film are quite reasonably press-shy, preferring that the film make its own statement before walking into a possible press ambush. Luckily for us, Twohy is less shy—because he's a writer, the newspapers never thought to blame him for the high winds and rough seas faced by *Waterworld*.

Twohy first became involved with the project in late 1993, when director Reynolds contacted him to work on a script for Costner. "The original script was by Peter Rader," says Twohy, "who gave us the concept of the polar caps flooding the world. Kevin Reynolds was originally going to direct another film of mine, *Terminal Velocity*, but he bailed on that, in order to rejoin *Waterworld*; it had been an ongoing project with him that he'd been flirting with for about six months. When he and Kevin Costner had committed to it, his first call was to me saying, let's rework this. To that end I wrote a treatment and two drafts over the course of the four-month period I had to work with them."

During that period of retooling, "Reynolds was very active in its development, and also very encouraging. He wanted to go nuts with it, you know? He wanted to let nothing go untried in terms of our imagination, let the reins loose. Later on we had to pull back on those reins—believe it or not, there were budget concerns.... We couldn't shoot everything that we wanted to. There were a few key scenes that were cut from the script for budget reasons."

A number of people have described *Waterworld* as "*Mad Max* on water," which, Twohy says, "isn't such a bad thing. I don't object to that. I don't think the director would object to it either. But we knew that we had to do







something more than *'Mad Max* on water,' and that we had to accomplish that in the story.

"I think one of the major things I brought to the show was the character of the Deacon (Dennis Hopper), the bad guy—giving him his own theology, giving him his own reasons for chasing the Mariner across the ocean. And really bumping up the jeopardy of the whole piece, which was my primary task, because the script was fine; it had a great premise but it was kind of lackadaisical in its urgency. So we wanted to retool all that. And that all stems from the bad guy. The jeopardy comes from the villain and the villain really had to be defined in this picture."

According to Twohy, it was also he and Reynolds who brought out the "ecological bent" of the story, by "portraying the bad guys as oil burning eco-pigs—the only ones left on the planet who have access to crude oil. They refine it and they still use it in heavy machine mode; they're the only ones who ply the oceans via machinery. The bad guys are generically called 'Smokers' because the first sign of them you may see is just these tendrils of smoke on the horizon coming your way. And the good guys in the story, called Atollers, are all solar-powered and wind-powered. Right away we have a schism of ecological philosophies between the good guys and the bad guys that runs throughout.

"The 'Smokers,' led by the Deacon, don't realize that the planet's resources are limited—they are, in fact, the people who contributed to making the world the way it is when our story opens. But they're too short-sighted to see that. They continue in their suicidal ways by just continuing to procreate



more and more—and overpopulating the planet more and more—and they don't understand why their resources are thinning out more and more—though how much of that is left in the film after it's edited down to its proper running time, I don't know. But we began with good intentions."

Into this world of unequal balance between the gentle Atollers in their man-made floating islands and the predatory Smokers enters a man called only the Mariner, a mutant with a mission, played by Costner. Despite the environmentally correct slant, Twohy agrees that the picture falls more into the category of heroic action film than social commentary. "We all see it, or initially saw it anyway, just as great summertime fare—if not for the critics, then surely for the audience. That's what we were trying to design—just a great popcorn movie in the best sense of that term."

Because Twohy had an earlier commitment to the producers of *Terminal Velocity*, he was unable to participate in later redrafts of his script, "addressing Costner's character concerns; basically, shaping his character to his preferences, and also addressing the studio's budgetary concerns, which meant cutting out a few scenes, then gluing the story back together after that."

Twohy, a native of Southern California, says that his imagination was first sparked by the works of Robert Heinlein and Harlan Ellison; during his adolescence he blazed through the principal works of the "classic" SF writers. When he attended college at Cal State in Long Beach, he initially majored in theater, but it didn't take him long to realize that film was where he wanted to make his career.

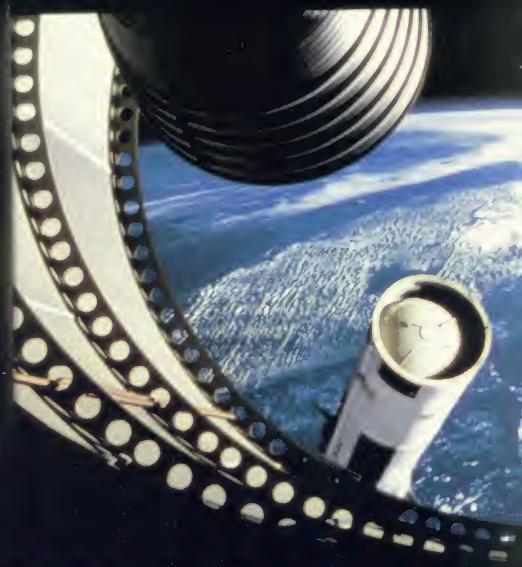
Twohy's breakthrough writing credits include a horror fan favorite, *Warlock*, which continues to spin off inferior sequels, and—more notably—the screenplay for *The Fugitive*. He is currently in development with *Shockwave*, which will be his second directorial effort and, like his first, a science fiction film.

Twohy's directorial debut, *The Grand Tour: Disaster in Time*, was filmed in 1992 for the Showtime cable network, and was based on the classic short SF novel *Vintage Season*, by

Continued on page 74

ABOVE: The Mariner sets out to find a better world for the Atollers. OPPOSITE ABOVE: The Deacon and the Mariner go head-to-head. OPPOSITE BELOW: The Mariner is joined in his quest by the lovely Atoller Helen (Jeanne Tripplehorn).

Photo: Digital Domain



Not the real thing but a cunning re-creation: without the use of NASA footage, Digital Domain created this vista of a Saturn V rocket jettisoning its booster.

Director Ron Howard tells how the cast and crew of Apollo 13 *learned to fly.*

BY LISA MACCARILLO

LOST MOON



ON THE morning of April 11, 1970, *Apollo 13* was launched on the nose of a Saturn V rocket.

It had been less than a year since Neil Armstrong's "small step" onto the surface of the moon, and thirteen years since the Russians fired the opening gun in the space race with the launch of *Sputnik*.

But the unbroken series of successful U.S. space missions had allowed Americans to become blasé about the space program, to the extent that none of the television networks deemed *Apollo 13*'s video feed worthy of broadcast. As the craft bored through space toward its pale destination, no one on earth could have known



Photos: Ron Batzdorff

that the most harrowing story in the history of the Apollo program was about to be played out in the cold, dark silence of space.

After traveling 205,000 miles, the craft's oxygen tank exploded, destroying the command module's main rocket engine and electrical system. The crew of *Apollo 13*—Jim Lovell, Fred Haise, and Jack Swigert—were forced into the tiny lunar module *Aquarius*, which was equipped with enough power and oxygen for two men over two days. Now it would have to sustain three people for four days as Lovell, Haise, and Swigert, with the help of Mission Control in Houston, manually steered the craft toward home, not knowing whether they would die by suffocation or hypothermia, or be incinerated upon reentering the Earth's atmosphere.

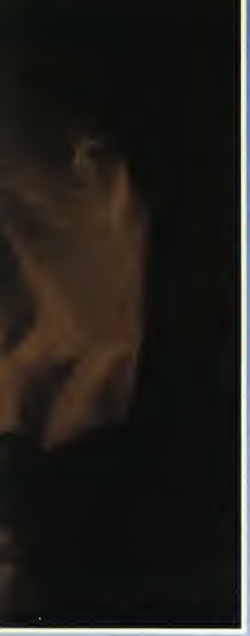
Jerry Bostick, the father of development executive Michael Bostick at Imagine Films, had been a member of the Mission Control crew during the Apollo era. "Michael Bostick's job is to find us interesting projects," says Ron Howard, *Apollo 13*'s director. "When he learned that Jim Lovell was coming out with a book based on the *Apollo 13* mission, which was called *Lost Moon*, he implored us to seriously sit down and think about doing this as a movie." After finding out more about the mission and the characters who made it successful, Howard felt it was a natural for the movies. "We realized that we really wouldn't have to 'Hollywoodize' this movie. If we could just dramatize what actually happened, it would be in and of itself very suspenseful and emotional and dramatic. So, we're very faithful to the story, both in spirit and in much of the detail."

TOM HANKS HAD WON HIS "BEST ACTOR" Oscar for *Philadelphia* and was on his way to winning his second in a row when he got wind that Howard and Grazer were developing a script about *Apollo 13*. The same team had given Hanks a great start in feature films with 1984's *Splash*, and all concerned had been looking for another project they could do together. "When his agent, (Creative Artists Agency's) Richard Lovett, told us that Tom had always wanted to play an astronaut and asked if we would be interested in letting him look at the script—" Howard takes a breath. "Well, that was the fastest answer in the annals of Hollywood."

According to Howard, Hanks had been a "day-to-day, mission-to-mission fanatic" of the space program. "He knew so much going in," says the director. "I didn't realize it, but he had long been particularly interested in this *Apollo 13* mission." Hanks came into their first preparatory meeting thoroughly familiar with the material and extremely committed to seeing that it was put on screen in an unadulterated form. "I don't want to do the fake Hollywood version," Howard recalls Hanks saying. "This stuff's fascinating and I want to present Lovell as a real guy."

"And that was absolutely in keeping with what I hoped to do," says Howard, "presenting these guys not as icons, but as individuals, as human beings—with all the strengths and weaknesses."

Astronaut Jim Lovell, whose memoir *Lost Moon* provided the basis of the film, has





OPPOSITE: Fred Haise (Bill Paxton), Jim Lovell (Tom Hanks), and Jack Swigert (Kevin Bacon) enjoy some weightlessness courtesy of NASA's KC-135 training craft. ABOVE: The Apollo 13 *crew set off on the ill-fated mission.*

clocked more hours in space than anyone alive. Prior to serving as commander of *Apollo 13*, he flew into space on *Gemini 7*, *Gemini 12* and *Apollo 8*, and had been an avid space hobbyist in his youth, launching his own homemade rockets at the age of seventeen. On meeting the NASA legend, Howard realized "that it took somebody like this to bring that ship back," he says. "It was the first time I'd met anybody from the space program. I have so much respect for that era, for what was accomplished during that period in our history that, to me, it was kind of like meeting John Wayne."

On their first meeting, Lovell arranged to take Hanks on a nighttime flight in his Beech Baron airplane with a confining triangular cardboard cutout installed in the cockpit—the idea being to convey the physical conditions and limited visibility experienced by test pilots of that era. "Lovell is a pretty fascinating individual," comments Howard. "Very personable, great sense of humor, loves to laugh, doesn't take himself or anything else all too seriously. But when it comes down to the business of space flight, he clearly was, and is, a master. His focus his physical and intellectual endurance, even to this day 25 years later, stand out most in my mind."

Hanks, too, was a constant source of inspiration for the director. "His overall integrity and belief in this project, coupled with his enthusiasm, made him more of a collaborator than simply a lead actor. He just couldn't wait to get into the spacesuit; no matter how uncomfortable the situation, he was just giddy to be there, living out a fantasy."

At just over two hours long, *Apollo 13* is as authentic as Howard could make it, without using a single image of NASA stock footage. "It seemed to me that a couple of scenes in *Backdraft* made people feel like they were in an actual fire," he explains. "I felt we had a similar opportunity to really make you understand what it feels like to be inside a capsule—not in the sci-fi way that we're accustomed to, but in a very realistic way."

In addition to box-office magnet Hanks, Howard cast Kevin Bacon as Jack Swigert and Bill Paxton as Fred Haise. Gary Sinise was cast as Ken Mattingly, the astronaut who, prevented by a last-minute case of measles from commanding *Apollo 13*, proved to be instrumental in helping them get back home. Ed Harris—John Glenn in *The Right Stuff*—plays Mission Control flight director Gene Kranz. Kathleen Quinlan portrays Lovell's wife, Marilyn. The script is by William Broyles, Jr. and Al Reinert (Reinert directed a 1988 documentary about the Apollo program, *For All Mankind*). Brian Grazer, Howard's partner in Imagine Films, is the producer.

"I think all of us felt that it was a unique professional opportunity to get to work on a story like this," the director says of his cast and crew. "Nobody wanted to let the mission down, so to speak, just as nobody wanted to let the program down during the Apollo era. I think that in an interesting way, everyone's diligence and dedication was more of a tribute to their respect for the Apollo era and their desire to do that justice than any respect they might feel for Hollywood or the making of one movie—as professional as all these people are. There was just an extra motive."

Following the imperatives of their director and Hanks, the entire production crew made authenticity their touchstone. "We had about a week of research and training," says Howard, "and another couple of weeks where we were fitting the actors for special body casts in case we had to do a lot of wire rigs, which we wound up not needing thanks to the success of the KC-135 (training craft) footage, and then about three weeks of rehearsal. We had, for a movie, a very extensive preparation period. In terms of trying to train nonpilots to understand NASA vernacular and the details of spaceflight, which was one of our goals, it felt like no time at all. And the process of discovery for all of us carried all the way through the picture."

The filmmakers enlisted *Apollo 15* commander Dave Scott to work as on-set technical adviser to ensure authenticity. "He was forever digging through transcripts and old flight plans and trying to explain to us what was really going on," Howard notes. "There was never a switch that was hit, or button that was pushed, or maneuver made in the capsule that wasn't accurate and that the actors didn't understand. We didn't try to explain everything (to the audience). It's not like an RCS valve is supposed to mean anything more to anyone after they see the movie than it did before, but the fact that it did mean something to the actors brought a lot of life and detail to those scenes."

Howard hired cinematographer Dean

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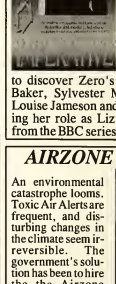
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ABOVE: Howard (foreground) and Hanks enjoy their twenty-three seconds of weightlessness. OPPOSITE: Spaceworks, Inc. built an exact replica of the Apollo 13 *command module with breakaway sections to allow filming capsule interiors.*

Cundey—who began his career with John Carpenter's earliest films and more recently has tackled such cinematically complicated films as *Jurassic Park* and *Casper*—to meet the demands of the potentially difficult shoot. "He is one of those veterans who knows every trick in the book, and nothing fazes him," says the director. "He's got a terrific imagination and is a good problem solver. I asked him to be the cinematographer because I knew that we'd be challenged every single day that we were shooting the capsules."

Basing every design on actual NASA specs, production designer Michael Corenblith (*Cool World*) oversaw the construction of the Mission Control set at Universal and enlisted Max Ary's KCSC Space Works, Inc., a facility for the fabrication and restoration of spacecraft, to build two command modules and two lunar modules at their facility in Hutchinson, Kansas.

"Both the command module and the lunar module, which are joined together in space, were bolted to the inside of the KC-135 trainer aircraft," says Howard. Based at Ellington Field in Houston, the KC-135 (nicknamed the "Vomit Comet") simulates weightlessness for about twenty-three seconds at a time by flying in a high-speed parabola trajectory. With NASA's help, Howard arranged to shoot for two weeks aboard the aircraft. Howard's description of the shoot sounds chaotic, if not impossible: "Besides some equipment that was bungie-corded to the floor, everything else was floating. Camera operators were floating, sometimes vomiting. The sound people, floating. Lighting, floating. Actors and directors, all floating."

Howard describes weightlessness as "terrifying, sometimes nauseating, ultimately exhilarating. The weightlessness, once you did relax with it, was really thrilling. The stress and strain really came from coming in and out of weightlessness—in order to go into a parabola, you have to pull two g's so you press down to the floor. Or, if you're taking them standing—we got to the point where we could do it—your blood is rushing out of your head and you feel a lot of pressure. All of a sudden that lifts, you float for twenty-three seconds, and then, as the pilot pulls out of the dive, you *slam* to the floor. That was a big part of our preparation, figuring out not only where the actors were going to be, but where the cameras and equipment and crew were going to be."

To deal with the inevitable nausea experienced in zero gravity, the actors and crew used Scope-Dex, an anti-airsickness concoction used by astronauts in training. While it didn't always work ("The camera operator threw up all over Kevin Bacon," laughs Howard.), everyone eventually became accustomed to weightlessness and was able to go without the medication.

After ten days in the KC-135, the production moved to a soundstage on the Universal lot where the second Apollo craft had been assembled. To simulate the condensation in the spacecraft and to make the actor's breath visible, the temperature had to be maintained at a frosty thirty-four degrees—actually quite a bit warmer than temperatures experienced by the actual astronauts. As Fred Haise later described the experience, "I've been a lot colder before, but I've never been so cold for so long."

AFTER THREE WEEKS OF SUCH TREATMENT, the cast and crew must certainly have had a strong impression of what the *Apollo 13* astronauts had been through. "That's really what this movie is," explains Howard. "It's not a documentary. It's really our impression of the mission, presented in a way so that people can really follow the story and appreciate not only the details of the mission and the steps that were taken, but the emotional impact that it was having on the individuals involved.

"As many hours as the guys spent in the flightsuits jammed in the capsule, either up in



the KC-135 or down on the soundstage where we chilled it to thirty-four degrees, it's an impression of what astronauts went through. To be in absolute peril 240,000 miles from Earth, at a time when the technology was really so primitive, the feelings that had to have been going through those guys—really, we can only guess at that and then try to present our impression of what we learned."

The filmmakers' accomplishments, both with the KC-135 and on the soundstage, allowed them to cut their order from effects house Digital Domain nearly in half, which still left them with 150 effects shots, including "some dream sequences involving the moon and Tom Hanks, and all the launch footage, exteriors in space, and going around the moon. And Digital Domain is doing great work, with authenticity as the number one objective," says Howard.

In addition to Howard's close involvement in the effects process, both adviser Dave Scott and Lovell himself spent time at the Digital Domain facility to advise and consult.

Howard's determination to accurately capture the Apollo era "homefront" was rewarded whenever Lovell and his family visited the soundstages and were amazed at the authentic reproduction of their home as a series of film sets. "They were always saying things like, 'You know, the rug under the coffee table was a different color, it wasn't this brown,' and they'd see all of our faces sink," Howard recalls with a smile. "And then they'd say, 'Ah, I was just joking. I don't even remember *what* the color was.'"

On the mission control set, Lovell and the other technical advisers were often so comfortable in their surroundings, they'd refer to something by pointing to where it should be, even though it was actually fifteen hundred miles away. "One guy said, 'Well, see, I used to live right over there,' and he pointed back over his head. And Lovell kept looking for the bathroom where he thought it ought to be and not outside the soundstage where they actually are.

"I think they really appreciated the effort that was made by the production designer and the art department and all the researchers, to be as authentic in every environment as we possibly could. We took great pains to constantly refine the environment, to create an experience for the audience that is based on something *real* and not just some stuff we made up."

For his long history in show business, Ron Howard is remarkably down-to-earth; despite his unbridled admiration for the risk-taking achievements of firefighters and astronauts, he'd likely forego a trip to outer space in favor of living to see his kids grow up. At the outset of our talk, he made us feel welcome by expressing his fondness for the Sci-Fi Channel. "I like it for all their great old shows," he says. "My wife and I try to catch it periodically. It's one of those things that anytime you scan by, you just get locked in, because those shows are so memorable."

Born in Duncan, Oklahoma, Ron Howard the actor is, of course, quite memorable himself, as Opie in the long-running television series *The Andy Griffith Show*, and as Richie Cunningham in *Happy Days*. Despite the demands of series television, Howard had a wide-ranging film career as well, acting in Anatole Litvak's drama *The Journey* (marking the screen debut of Jason Robards, Jr., as well as Howard); being trapped along with Tommy Kirk and young Beau Bridges in Bert

Continued on page 81

More Than Human

A WOMAN TOO BEAUTIful to be real stretches out across a video wall together with Dr. Daryl Lindenmeyer, the brilliant scientist who created her. No sooner is he upon her than the image of the scientist disappears into static. "What's wrong?" says Sheila 3.2. "Was I bad? Are you going to punish me?" "Not now, Sheila!" says the scientist as he yanks her chip from the VR (virtual reality) drive. The video wall goes suddenly blank.

"Cut," says Brett Leonard, the director of this little scenario. "Cut!" echo the voices of assistant directors and public address systems throughout the cavernous hangar in which the virtual reality simulator set has been mounted. The simulator is honeycomb-shaped with ducts rising up into the darkness and two seats mounted at its base. Banks of computer workstations and a biofeedback monitor stretch off in a trail leading away from the giant construction. Despite the apparent size of the set, it takes up very little room in the gigantic hangar.

"It's apropos that we're sitting here shooting this at the Hughes Aircraft facility," says Leonard over a cooling plate of catered Chinese food. "This was a bastion of the cold war. We have literally shot in the main computer room where they did all the guided missile software. They used thumbprint standards and top secret clearance—the things you see in science fiction movies. We've shifted that into entertainment. I've really enjoyed the fact that we're shooting here."

Leonard is in the middle of the sixty-five-day principal shoot of *Virtuosity*, a studio movie with effects demands

The director of The Lawnmower Man *returns to cyberspace in* Virtuosity.

BY LISA MACCARILLO



Denzel Washington plays the role of Parker Barnes, a cop in pursuit of a "virtual" criminal, in Virtuosity.

Photos: Sidney Baldwin, ©1995 Paramount Pictures





greater than any of the movies he's done thus far. "The pressure of a film at this level makes *The Lawnmower Man* look like a day at Disneyland," he says with a wry laugh. Not only does he have a budget many times what he's accustomed to, but he's working with an A-list cast, and is giving his new start-up effects company, L2 Communications, its first gig. "This is easily the most challenging film I've ever made," says the lanky, bearded director. "I've got the biggest LCD (liquid crystal display) video wall in history; we shot the blue screen in the beginning part of the schedule, had to produce thirty effects shots, and then play them back on the screen within two months. The logistics of this film have been truly daunting."

Equally as daunting was shooting a film-set partly in the streets of Los Angeles, which the director compares to "mounting a military campaign. I have a helicopter gun battle on the top of a skyscraper in the middle of downtown. We were working in one of these new Metrolink subway stations that are suspended in the middle of all these freeways over by the L.A. Airport. It's very archetypically LA as a visual, but no one's ever shot there before because it's so logistically difficult. So, it's been a very, very intense shoot."

Added to the mix is box office golden boy and Academy Award-winner Denzel Washington, starring as the film's hero, Parker Barnes. "I feel really fortunate to have an actor of Denzel's caliber in this type of film," Leonard says. "Parker Barnes is an ex-cop who killed innocent people, spent five years in prison, lost his family, and got his arm blown off. He's a tragic protagonist, and Denzel has an amazing presence and just roots the story in human truth."

Produced by Gary Lucchesi, executive produced by Howard W. Koch, Jr., co-produced by Leonard's longtime partner Gimel Everett, and starring Washington, Kelly Lynch, Russell Crowe, Stephen Spinella, William Forsythe, and Louise Fletcher, *Virtuosity* tells the story of a police department out of control and the deadly, inorganic force it sets loose in Los Angeles on the eve of the new millenium. "We're not fighting a cold war outside of our borders anymore," says the director. "We're fighting a hot war within our borders, so all that cold war technology and funding—which has to go somewhere—goes to the same old boys that have been using it all along, except now they're fighting urban insurrection."

Leonard describes the film as "a fun, slightly disturbing, balls-to-the-wall roller coaster ride. It's for the audience that enjoys intensity. Once it starts, it doesn't stop. It's not gory, but where there's evil, there's serious evil, and where there's good, there's serious







OPPOSITE: Barnes and partner John Donovan (Costas Mandylor) explore virtual reality. TOP: Criminal behavior specialist Madison Carter (Kelly Lynch) assists in tracking Sid 6.7. ABOVE: Dr. Lindenmeyer has a chat with his creation.

good, and they definitely slam headlong into each other and create a powerful vibration."

After taking the cinema on its first virtual reality trip with his hit 1993 film, *The Lawnmower Man*, Leonard gives the concept much more casual handling in *Virtuosity*. "It's sort of interesting from my perspective," he says. "In *The Lawnmower Man*, you had to talk about virtual reality a lot because no one knew what the hell the term meant. Now, you can't pick up a newspaper and not see the term. So in this film VR is just part of everyday life. We're saying that the highest-end VR is going on in this building."

The VR simulator so painstakingingly constructed in the Hughes lair represents the state-of-the-art in police training technology, developed by the government-funded laboratories of L.E.T.A.C. (Law Enforcement Technology Advancement Center). The simulator allows cops to test their prowess against Sid 6.7, a computer-generated "virtual" villain. Sid 6.7 (played by Russell Crowe of *Romper Stomper*) is the product of decades worth of criminal profiling, "He's 183 serial killers and villains all in one guy," says Leonard. "Sid is completely synthetic. He's all these different aspects of human behavior, but he's not real. It's all sort of out of proportion to reality, which makes it fun. Russell Crowe brought a lot of humor to Sid. He's a fun character that you love to hate."

Sid stands for "sadistic, intelligent, and dangerous, version 6.7," adds screenwriter Eric Bernt, who also wrote 1993's *Surviving the Game*. "He's the cornerstone of the story. I wanted to fuse Hannibal Lecter's fun, intelligence, and wittiness with the Terminator's unstoppability. He was created by Dr. Lindenmeyer without regard for what could happen when it gets out or how they're going to stop it."

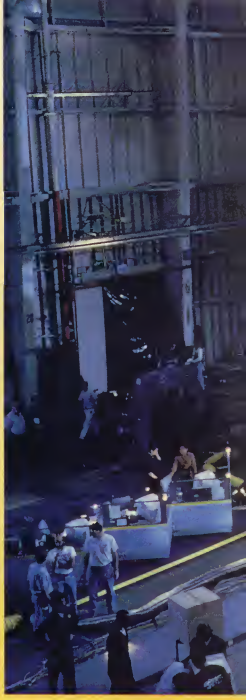
Leonard describes Daryl Lindenmeyer, played by two-time Tony Award-winning actor Stephen Spinella, as "a new type of Dr. Frankenstein. He's a very disturbed person who only expresses disturbed aspects of his psychology through virtuosity, which is software. He wanted to be a composer but ended up composing software instead of music. That aspect of him made it into Sid's psychological profile.

"I work with a lot of people that are fairly dysfunctional socially but do all this technological work, and it's a new kind of archetype for me—someone who can be very meek and mild and yet their inner life, what they play with in VR, could be the most horrifying thing imaginable."

The story poses the question of what hap-







TOP: Russell Crowe as Sid 6.7, a VR creation invading the real world. ABOVE: Lawnmower Man's *Jobe, a man who becomes a VR "god." OPPOSITE: The VR simulator set, housed in a former aircraft manufacturing facility.*

pens when this ultimate amalgam of humanity's worst qualities breaks the bonds imposed by the boundaries of its virtual world. "The leap of faith is that he is incubated into a nanotech android," says Leonard.

With nanotechnology, Leonard places himself again on the leading edge of public awareness, as he had earlier with the VR tech of *The Lawnmower Man*. Leonard plans to explain nanotechnology through computer graphics, taking the audience down into the microscopic nanotech world.

"Brett Leonard introduced the idea of nanotechnology to me," says Bernt, whose original draft of the script had Sid 6.7 coming to life through a much more Terminatorlike android. "Nanotechnology is the science of building synthetic machines out of machines the size of cells or molecules. There's an abundance of technology in this movie, more probably than people have ever seen."

Sid 6.7 begins his life as a human in 1999 Los Angeles. Leonard compares it to having your copy of the popular, violent computer game *Doom* come to life. "That would be a very bad planet to live on," he says. Sid 6.7 starts out "very infantlike," says the director, "but he's got a lot of complex personalities inside of him. He wants to fit in, but what he provides as a service is death. That's his thing. He says, 'I came to be because of what you are. That's who I am—so embrace it, because it came out of you.'"

In that way, Sid is reminiscent of another of man's rebellious creations, the computer Hal in *2001: A Space Odyssey*, made by Leonard's idol, Stanley Kubrick. "I think I make films because of *2001: A Space Odyssey*," he says. "I saw it when I was seven years old and I just said, 'That is slammin.' I enjoy stories about characters that explore extreme edges of experience and then take the audience to an extreme edge of experience, and maybe play visually with something that doesn't really fall into traditional narrative logic. I like dealing with things that get out of control, whether it's technology or a psychic connection."

Leonard sees recent technological advances as another stage in our evolution as humans. "It accelerates our evolution in both a de-evolutionary way and in an expanded way, and both things will happen simultaneously, especially around the millenium. I think there's going to be a tremendous catharsis around this stuff. If you look at the last turn of the century, what happened in a span of ten to fifteen years completely changed human life on the planet forever. In a ten-year period, automobiles, electricity, all of these things came in that now we take for



granted as what it means to be human. Before that, it was a different sense of transportation or communication."

Leonard's films reflect a philosophy that suggests technology has become a wellspring of mythology. "What's happening now is this sort of revolution in cyberspace," he notes. "Extending our minds electronically, extending who we are, that whole mythology needs to be told around the campfire. That's our main story as a species: how we are using technology to extend ourselves, our bodies, our minds, our spirits, our souls and beyond. I think that technology at the turn of the millenium will rush so fast that the next five years will blow everyone's mind. Already, just a little bit into '95, we've got some serious stuff going down that would suggest that millenial madness has seeped in."

Leonard confesses to a tendency to insert a cautionary note into his films; the subtle message within the VR scenes in *The Lawnmower Man* warned against the potentially alienating aspect of the technology. "I didn't think the heads-up displays, goggles, and gloves design, which has now been copied in real VR gear and games, was a good idea," he says. "That was supposed to be the alienating form of psychology. I think VR is really about what we're doing as a human community and how do we communicate with technology. I think the hardware expression of heads-up displays, goggles, and gloves is being put to rest. But the idea of what we're turning into through cyberspace and the Internet connecting the global electronic communities—that's the thing that's going to continue to be fertile ground to plow."

Leonard's first film, a direct-to-video endeavor entitled *Dead Pit* (a k a *Walking Dead*), was about a mad doctor who wantonly lobotomizes a stable of mental patients and the mayhem that ensues when a woman accidentally unseals his 'dead pit' of brainless zombies. Leonard's most recent film, *Hideaway*, was about a man who brings an evil presence back with him from the dead.

Adapted from a novel by best-selling author Dean Koontz, *Hideaway* sustained some negative publicity after Koontz lambasted the film in the press and sued to have his name removed. Leonard shrugs it off. "Koontz was a nightmare," he says. "The guy never watched the movie. He walked out almost at the beginning part of the film. I mean, the kids were lovin' it through the whole death journey, then I heard an 'errumph,' and then he got up and walked out. What's interesting is that in all of our test screenings, the audience that had read the book thought it was a fairly faithful adaptation. He just wanted to hate it."

Continued on page 81



An intergalactic criminal from the "Double Duty" episode of Space Precinct. *OPPOSITE: Cast members from Anderson's "Supermarionetted" classic* Thunderbirds.

THE SCI-FI WORLDS OF Gerry Anderson

A talk with the man behind **Thunderbirds, Space: 1999** *and, his latest, the intergalactic crime show* **Space Precinct.**

BY SIMON BACALL

AFTER MANY YEARS WITH the New York Police Department, a hardened cop may crave relief from the killings, drug abuse, wife battering and countless other crimes which plague the Big Apple, but in *Space Precinct*, a $36 million syndicated science fiction/action adventure series, Lieutenant Patrick Brogan (Ted Shackelford) gets a different kind of break. A twenty-five-year-old veteran of the NYPD, Brogan and his family, consisting of his wife, Sally (Nancy Paul), his son, Matt (Nic Klein), and Liz (Megan Olive), his daughter, are transferred to outer space. Responsible for sending them there, via Pinewood and Shepperton Studios in London, England, the shooting ground for *Space Precinct*'s twenty-four hour-long episodes, is Gerry Anderson, the show's British creator and producer.

"A few years ago I had made a pilot called *Space Police*," recalls Anderson. "And when we brought it to the U.S., the pilot received a very positive reaction, but after we returned to England, my partner entered the publishing business and began to play golf. He became very expert at golf and traveled around the world but, in the meantime, *Space Police* and the production company which produced it became dormant."

Anderson's decision to revive the concept stemmed from his burning desire to create a show which successfully combined the tension of police action with the wonder and adventure of science fiction.

"Over the years, I had felt that every conceivable cop show—ranging from the Jewish cop to the crooked cop to the bald cop—had already been made, but a cop show set in space was something which had never been explored."

Set in the middle of the twenty-first century, Space Precinct is in the Demeter System, a solar system located along a spiral arm of the Milky Way. At the crossroads of the Demeter System is the planet Altor, with a thriving metropolis, Demeter City, home to two alien species, the Creons and the Tarns. Though the Creons' native home is the planet Danae and the Tarns' home turf is the planet Simter, both races have relocated to Demeter City, thanks to increased poverty on their native planets and the burgeoning trade opportunities on Altor. As a result, Demeter City, attracting good and bad elements amongst an intergalactic melting pot, has become the crime capital of the galaxy.

Living in a space suburb which rotates over Demeter City, Brogan hops into his police cruiser and heads for the orbiting precinct house, where his fellow officers are his rookie sidekick, Jack Haldane (Rob Youngblood); Officer Jane Castle (Simone Bendix); Captain Podly (Jerome Willis), a Creon; and Took (Mary Woodvine), a Tarn.



"These characters are incredibly intriguing, but the most important character is Brogan," Anderson points out. "Because he's spent all that time in the NYPD, he's seen it all, so absolutely nothing shocks him anymore. At the same time, he's this happily married, nice guy who will always go the extra mile to protect his loved ones.

As pleased as I am to present another issue, I'm a little bummed out, too; in the last couple of weeks I've had the chance to screen some of the big summer movies and, I don't mind telling you, I'm disappointed. By the time you read this, you will have seen some of the same movies, and you will probably have some idea what I'm talking about.

So far, the highlight of the season has been Mel Gibson's *Braveheart*, and I found that severely flawed. I don't mind the many historical inaccuracies; the objective was clearly to make a romance based upon the legends concerning William Wallace, the Scottish patriot. That was accomplished quite well within the film's first ninety minutes or so. The problem is that it should have ended as Wallace's days of glory ended, with his defeat at Falkirk in 1298. Instead, the film stutters to an end that is dependent on a preposterously unbelievable love story. At any rate, the film does have lots of footage of men hitting each other with hammers, and I don't suppose you can hope for better summer entertainment than that.

There's disappointing news on the television front as well; word has just reached us that *VR5* and *Sliders* will both be absent from Fox TV's fall schedule. To be honest, I won't miss *VR5* all that much; the writers obviously were groping to distill the show's concept into a cohesive, continuing story, and sometimes their struggle was painful to watch. Though thirteen episodes were shot, only ten have been aired, and it looks as if it will stay that way, unless the program finds a new life on another network, or in syndication—which is certainly a possibility.

Sliders is another matter. It's a well-written show, with a great, simple concept that lends itself to infinite variations, and its cast is likeable and versatile. News of its cancellation appeared in *USA Today* two days ago; as I write this, there are already several hundred postings in the Usenet newsgroup "alt.tv.sliders," most of which are messages from fans encouraging other fans to let their feelings be known regarding this decision. ("alt.tv.vr5" has similar postings, but far fewer of them—even though Fox gave that show a much better time slot and more concentrated promotion.)

I called the office of John Landis, *Slider*'s executive producer, to see if I could learn anything more. Officially, the word is that Fox has not actually cancelled the show but has placed it on hiatus; it could return as a mid-season replacement. But there is also a feeling that, while *Sliders* had delivered some promising ratings, Fox is uninterested in developing an audience for a show that was developed by Universal's television division. Unless there are some very strong ratings for summer repeats of *Sliders*, Fox is unlikely to order new episodes.

Should Fox fail to pick up its option for another season of *Sliders* shows, there remains a possibility that the show might return on another network.

At any rate, if you wish to make your feelings known regarding either show, write to: Programming Department, Fox Broadcasting Company, 10201 W Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90035.

Good news on the Channel, though—with the growing popularity of Japanese animation in the United States, the Sci-Fi Channel will devote a large chunk of its Saturday a.m. lineup to *anime* features, starting this fall.

As the guys in programming expressed it, it sounds like it's something of a trial balloon to determine how much interest there is among the Channel's viewership in a regularly scheduled weekly dose of such exotic fare. Since there is a vast store of TV and original video *anime* that has yet to be seen on American television, a successful Saturday morning could easily lead to more. While it may seem I'm hyping the Channel here, I really have my own selfish purposes—I'm starting to develop a strong liking for the stuff myself, and would love to see *anime* programming become a Channel staple.

Jumping to yet another issue, my last editorial has inspired a lot of people to go over our recent issues with a fine-toothed comb in search of yet more errors, like the fact that I misspelled Patrick McGoohan's name (He is always associated in my mind with two other British actors, Patrick Magee and Patrick Macnee; and I spelled his name Magoohan. I am sorry.), and that I had the photo ID's of Drew Barrymoore and Debi Mazur reversed. Some of these people seem to think that I promised that there would be no more errors. I never said any such thing; I only promised that we would own up to such errors and correct them.

No one has written in (yet) to correct an art credit we ran last issue. At the last minute, I called the production office to tell them to please run a credit with a piece of *Judge Dredd* art to read, "art by Brian Bolland." Unfortunately, there were two pieces of *Dredd* art in that issue. The Bolland credit was paired with a piece drawn by Bryan Talbot that appeared on page 78. The actual Bolland art was on page 34. And, by the way, I've already yelled at the art department, who neglected to run any pictures of Ted Shackelford, the star of *Space Precinct*, with the Gerry Anderson piece that appears in this issue. You haven't missed much, he's a middle-aged, balding blond guy (but a good actor, though).

—Ed Flixman

SCI-FI CHANNEL
SCI-FI ENTERTAINMENT

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TOP: The multispecies police force in the episode "The Snake." ABOVE: The arch-criminal featured in the episode "Time To Kill." OPPOSITE: The space station housing Space Police HQ.

Haldane is an interesting character because he's younger, so he takes life less seriously and, in turn, takes more risks than the rest of the team. Jane Castle is strong, attractive, and believable without being a bimbo, and Captain Podly is a prestigious character because he's an alien who's filling a very important role within this universe. At the same time, he's bringing across his human emotions effectively and enabling us to understand him. Last, but not least, Took possesses wonderful female attributes and has a third eye which enables her to read other peoples' thoughts."

Such a wide range of characters requires Anderson and his production team—which includes executive producers Tom Gutteridge, Roger Lefkon, and John Needham—to maintain a solid balance between the live action, miniatures, and computer-generated effects. "At Pinewood we film the live action on three sound stages," Anderson expands. "In another studio, we have a main special effects unit, while another unit handles motion control, and yet another team uses Silicon Graphic computers for the post-production work."

According to Anderson, another challenge lay in establishing alien makeup effects which were quick and easy to apply, yet effective and original.

"As a producer, I usually find myself trying the outright impossible. When I first described the show to our financial backers, I described aliens far more advanced than those aliens which we've previously seen on TV. This attracted them because it would hopefully make the show different and better, but once we secured that backing, we obviously had to deliver the goodies.

"When you're making a feature film, you can have an actor in the makeup chair for four hours in the morning and a further one and a half hours at the end of the shooting day, but when you're working for television, that's just not possible. That's why we're using a new type of makeup which we can get onto the actors within a twenty-minute time frame—something which initially required us to carry out an enormous amount of research and experimentation."

As fans of the science fiction/fantasy genre will know, *Space Precinct* is only the latest chapter of Anderson's long and illustrious career in television, films and, most notably, science fiction. Entering the British film industry as an apprentice in 1943, he worked as an assistant editor and dubbing editor on many British films before making his directorial debut in 1954 on the TV series *You've Never Seen This*. In 1955, he co-founded Pentagon Films, his first company, a move which lead to the formation, with Arthur Provis, of A.P. Films and the beginning of a career as a creator and producer of children's programming. Following the success of his first two series, *The Adventures of Twizzle and Torchy* and *The Battery Boy*, a show called *Four Feather Falls*—a marionette series set in the American West—catapulted Anderson into the international spotlight. The form of filmmaking used in the show, a landmark technique which Anderson termed Supermarionation, was used again in his later series *Stingray* (the first British television series to be produced in color, shown on the Sci-Fi Channel on Saturday morning) and *Thunderbirds*.

Stingray revolved around the character of Troy Tempest, who used the *Stingray* submarine in an ongoing fight for underwater rights, as a representative of the World Aquanaut Security Patrol (sound familiar, *SeaQuest* fans?), while *Thunderbirds* introduced audiences to the world of International Rescue. Based on a Pacific island, International Rescue—an organization dedicated to rescuing people from tight jams—experimented with their latest inventions, namely *Thunderbird* 3, a spacecraft operable in space and on Earth, and their orbiting space station, called *Thunderbird* 5. Today, Anderson freely shares the once closely held secrets of "Supermarionation."

"The marionettes' hollow fiberglass heads were fit with automatic mouth movement, and the bodies, which were operated on overheads from very fine wires, consisted of fiberglass components," recalls Anderson. "The puppets' voices were pre-recorded before we shot each episode, so when they were later played back on the studio floor, two things happened. The puppeteers mimed the puppets to the dialogue which was played back , while the pre-recorded dialogue went through a special box which trans-



formed the speech into electrical impulses. Basically, these traveled into the heads and enabled the mouths to open and close automatically in sync with the dialogue."

A huge hit, aired in 150 markets in the United States and 88 countries worldwide, *Thunderbirds* earned Anderson the Royal Television Society's Silver Medal For Outstanding Achievement and an Honorary Fellowship from the British Kinematograph Sound and Television Society; sparked a range of merchandise; and spawned two feature films, *Thunderbirds Six* and *Thunderbirds Are Go*. Recently, *Thunderbirds* was revived for Britain's BBC Television and, briefly, on America's Fox network. Anderson attributes the show's successful British revival of episodes in their original format to a large number of adult fans who remember *Thunderbirds* from childhood.

After producing the 1969 science fiction thriller *Doppelganger*, a film which received an Oscar nomination for special effects, in 1972 Anderson applied his skills to *UFO*, a TV series about S.H.A.D.O. (Supreme Headquarters Alien Defense Organization), an establishment bent on protecting the Earth from alien invasion. Overseen by Ed Straker, played by Ed Bishop, S.H.A.D.O was based in England, where the series was filmed, and on the moon. "This show had been leading the ratings in New York and London for seventeen consecutive weeks, but during the new season, the ratings dropped, the network executives panicked, and the show was cancelled. At that time, I switched the story around and renamed the show *Space: 1999*.

With an international cast headed up by Martin Landau and Barbara Bain, *Space: 1999*, airing from 1975 to 1977, revolved around Moonbase Alpha, a futuristic complex located on the moon and home to commander John Koenig (Landau), Dr. Helen Russell (Bain), and Victor Bergman (Barry Morse), a scientist. After an explosion of nuclear waste blasted the moon out of orbit in the first episode, Koenig, Russell, Bergman, and the remainder of Moonbase Alpha's population hurtled through space and met new aliens.

"*Space: 1999* was this clean, clinical and harmonious view of the future which, unfortunately, has not materialized," Anderson muses. "The world and technology have, of course, changed, but people have not changed, so my vision of the future was obviously a major error. One day I may revive the show, but Moonbase Alpha, instead of being this beautifully maintained base, would deteriorate considerably, while the characters' evil sides would be much more prevalent."

Meanwhile, Anderson's many other credits include the effects for the musical *Return to the Forbidden Planet*—a show which, in 1990, was awarded the Musical of the Year Award by the British newspaper *The Evening Standard*.

About the show, which was based on the classic 1956 science fiction thriller *Forbidden Planet*, Anderson comments: "I was approached to do the special effects for a figure which was so low that I originally turned it down, but when the theater company desperately asked me to do the effects, I finally agreed. In return, they gave me a little piece of the show, so I've been earning money from *Return to the Forbidden Planet* for the last four years.

"I filmed this gigantic monster, which appears on a planet's surface, and I caused a planet to explode in space. Interestingly, the producers wanted the audience to see the wires which were operating the monsters because they were hoping to enhance the show with a 1950s look. As a result, we went the extra mile to make the special effects as bad as possible by using thicker operating wires, which really showed up in the lighting. It really was a tremendous amount of unforgettable fun." □

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Continued from page 18

invaders will begin to appear. If you haven't managed to uncover the secret of the alien sonic weapons by the time the lobster men make their first appearance, go ahead and surrender. Taking out these hard-shells with human weapons is an all-but-impossible task.

Your success or failure in each mission is gauged by the number of aliens defeated and alien technology recovered, versus the number of human operatives and civilians killed. At the end of each month, the nations of the world will vote on your performance, and your funding will go up or down to reflect their impression of the job you're doing. Screw up too many times, and your available funds will drop like a stone. Within a few months, you'll find nations signing agreements with the aliens and XCOM will be defunct.

The longer you hang on, the more complex the situation becomes. Soon you face huge, multi-level alien bases and immense subs that can both outgun and outrun your initial models. Alien "molecular control" technique will have you screaming as they take charge of one of your own troops and use him to shoot the others. Don't give up. Follow the right leads, and you can pick up some of this technology for yourself. Interrogating alien navigators and examining the remains of downed subs will allow you to upgrade your subs and build new models based around alien gear. Learn molecular control yourself and turn the table on these brainiacs. There's nothing quite like the mind-control suicide—take over an alien, arm a grenade, drop it, sit back and watch.

If the XCOM games have a flaw, it's that the tactical sequences can become tedious. For gamers used to the big picture approach of many strategic games, steering the troops through every move can become something of a labor. And some of the zones—particularly cruise ships and alien bases—are so large that one conflict can take over an hour to resolve.

If you can hang in there and pay attention, the rewards are great. Guide your crew successfully through mission after mission, and watch as they gain both rank and experience. Equip them with the latest gear and mop up the alien forces. Get the aliens on the run. Go after their central bases. Revel in the accolades of world leaders. Save the Earth.

One thing's for sure: few games provide the sense of accomplishment that you'll get from an extended session with XCOM. When the alien threat is extinguished, you'll feel like you've been going one-on-one with *The Thing from Outer Space*. In a time when half the titles on the shelf are "interactive movies" with a play length that can be measured in seconds, XCOM provides weeks of entertainment. I know how I'm spending my money.

Mark Sumner

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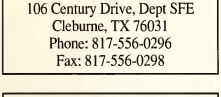
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AKIRA

Continued from page 40

this two-hour, four-minute movie. Otomo himself had a rare amount of involvement in the project, co-writing the screenplay, directing, storyboarding, and acting as character designer. At times confusing, *Akira* features richly textured backgrounds, spectacular special effects, and some of the most intense and sometimes ultraviolent visuals to grace animated celluloid. Some scenes, especially those showing the streets of nighttime Neo-Tokyo, often cause *Akira* to be compared to *Blade Runner;* others have it compared to *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

Equally compelling is the film's soundtrack, composed by Shoji Yamashiro and performed by the Geinoh Yamashirogumi. The Geinoh Yamashirogumi can best be described as an orchestral chorus—a group of over 200 singers using their voices as instruments. Using a combination of traditional music and sounds, modern synthesizers, ritualistic chants, and a little digital wizardry, the soundtrack lends even the most hi-tech scenes a certain primal intensity. Hearing Buddhist chanting during the opening clash between the Capsules and their rivals the Clowns, one gets the feeling of watching a ritual battle as old as humanity.

Akira was released in Japan on July 16, 1988—the same date as the destruction of Tokyo, according to the film's opening. A little over a year later, Streamline Pictures acquired the rights to distribute the English-language version of *Akira* in the United States. Founded earlier in the year by animation historian Jerry Beck (co-author of *Looney Tunes and Merrie Melodies*) and television animation producer Carl Macek (script editor on *Robotech*), Streamline's mandate was to bring Japanese animation to American cinemas.

Streamline's first two titles were *Laputa*, Hayao Miyazaki's tale of the quest for Jonathan Swift's flying city, and *Twilight of the Cockroaches*, a live-action/animation feature about a bachelor who peacefully coexists with the roaches in his apartment until he gets a girlfriend.

Both films toured the country's art and repertory cinemas, enjoying favorable but scant media attention. *Akira*, Streamline's third acquisition, blew open the doors and quickly attained cult movie status. The movie became Streamline's first and, thus far, most popular video release, and two years later it was released in a deluxe laserdisc edition, giving *Akira* the sort of deluxe treatment generally reserved for such revered cinema works as *Blade Runner*.

Anime fans can also look forward to this fall, when Saturday mornings from 9 to 11 a.m. will become a regular *anime* time-slot on the Channel, featuring many of the favorite films from past *anime* festivals, including *Robot Carnival*, *Project A-ko*, *Vampire Hunter D*, and many more. □

WATERWORLD

Continued from page 55

Henry Kuttner and C.L. Moore (originally published under the joint pseudonym Laurence O'Donnell). It concerned time-traveling tourists visiting the great disasters of history and winding up in present-day America. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times," says Twohy, quoting another classic to invoke his conflicting feelings about that film. "I was very happy with the experience, if not the product. I think I wrote a good film, I think I shot a good film, I think in the postproduction it got a little screwed up—because, you know, even though you direct it, you don't necessarily have final cut—and when other people cut your film, it can be…you can lose control, and it can be damaging…as Mr. Reynolds has now found out a couple of times. That's what happened on my first film; it was a good time and a bad time—but not so bad that I wasn't willing to try it again four years later."

Shockwave may prove to be a happier story for its director, if not for its characters; some time ago, it was reported in these pages that it was one of several Disney SF projects that were axed shortly after Jeffrey Katzenberg left the studio, which Twohy confirms. "It got purged when Hoberman came in. It fell, perhaps for the better, back into the independent ranks—I'm doing it for LIVE Entertainment."

Twohy's original screenplay, which will go before the cameras this fall, concerns the aftermath of Earth's first contact with extraterrestrial intelligence—a subject also recently tackled in *Species* and soon to be undertaken in *Contact*, a Jodie Foster vehicle drawn from the Carl Sagan novel. Twohy, SF buff that he is, feels he has an approach that is somewhat different, though it's much too soon to give that away.

Right now, Twohy is thoroughly occupied with early preproduction chores, assembling cast and crew for the moderately budgeted feature, and taking the time to field the occasional *Waterworld* interview. In doing so, he makes it clear that it's not only the film, but the people behind it who have been given a bad shake by the press. "These are good people," he says, "including the producer, Chuck Gordon; Kevin Reynolds is one of the most decent guys in the business. I don't know Costner as well, but my take on him is that—for being a "superstar"—he's a very unpretentious guy, who had good things to contribute; not in such detail as with the director. My working relationship was with Kevin Reynolds.

"But it was nothing but positive for me. They're all good people and I've reached a point in my career where I can pick and choose the projects, and I chose this one because the people involved were talented.

"I don't know whether they'll ever be working together again, but I would gladly work again with either—or both." □

SCI-FI CHANNEL

JULY • AUGUST PROGRAMMING SCHEDULE

DAYTIME

TIME	Monday - Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00	Informational	Informational	Informational
6:30			
7:00	Animation Station: Droids/Ewoks;		
7:30	The Bionic Six		
8:00	Defenders of the Earth		
8:30	New Adventures of Gigantor		
9:00	The Powers of Matthew Star / Time Tunnel	Animation Station: Stingray	Sci-Fi Buzz
9:30		Capt. Scarlet	Mysteries/Magic/Miracles
10:00	Ripley's Believe It or Not	Back to the Future	Inside Space
10:30		Mad Scientists' Club	C-Net Central
11:00	Dark Shadows	Land of the Giants	One Step Beyond
11:30	Dark Shadows		One Step Beyond
Noon	Sci-Fi Series Collection	Swamp Thing	Galactica 1980
12:30		Swamp Thing	Swamp Thing
1:00	Alfred Hitchcock Presents	Space: 1999	Voyage to the Bottom of Sea
1:30	Beyond Reality		
2:00	Night Gallery	Moonlight Matinee	UFO
2:30	Ray Bradbury Theater		
3:00	Ripley's Believe It or Not		Moonlight Matinee
3:30			
4:00	Voyagers/ Misfits of Science	Radiation Theater	
4:30			Radiation Theater
5:00	The Bionic Woman		
5:30			
6:00	The Six Million Dollar Man	My Secret Identity	
6:30		My Secret Identity	One Step Beyond

EVENING

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
7:00	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone
7:30	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside
8:00	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Sci-Fi Feature	Amazing Stories
8:30						Film	Amazing Stories
9:00	SF Series*	SF Series*	SF Series*	SF Series*	SF Series*		Sci-Fi Buzz
9:30							Mysteries/Magic
10:00	Friday 13th: Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	War of the Worlds	Inside Space
10:30							C-Net Central

LATE NIGHT

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
11:00	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone
11:30	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside	Tales/Darkside
Midnite	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Quantum Leap	Sci-Fi Feature	Amazing Stories
12:30						Film	Amazing Stories
1:00	SF Series*	SF Series*	SF Series*	SF Series*	SF Series*		Sci-Fi Buzz
1:30							Mysteries/Magic
2:00	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	Friday 13th:Series*	War of the Worlds	Inside Space
2:30							C-Net Central
3:00	Informational	Informational	Informational	Suspense Theater	Retro TV	Radiation Theater	Sci-Fi Trader
3:30							Informational

All programming shown Eastern Standard Time. Please adapt for your local time zone. Titles in red denote original programming. All programming subject to change. This schedule is effective through September 24, 1995.
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JULY MOVIES
ON THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

SATURDAY, 7/1

2:00 p.m. The Projected Man
1967, Science Fiction, Bryant Halliday

4:00 p.m. The Clone Master
1978, Science Fiction, Art Hindle

8:00 p.m. Vampire at Midnight
1988, Horror, Jason Williams

12:00 a.m. Vampire at Midnight
1988, Horror, Jason Williams

3:00 a.m. The Brain
1965, Science Fiction, Peter Van Eyck

SUNDAY, 7/2

3:00 p.m. The Lightning Incident
1991, Suspense, Nancy McKeon, Polly Bergen

5:00 p.m. Blood and Roses
1961, Horror, Mel Ferrer, Annette Vadim

MONDAY, 7/3

9:00 a.m. Twilight Zone Marathon
Science Fiction, Various Stars

TUESDAY, 7/4

9:00 a.m. Twilight Zone Marathon
Science Fiction, Various Stars

SATURDAY, 7/8

2:00 p.m. Barbarian Queen
1985, Fantasy, Lana Clarkson, Frank Zagarino

4:00 p.m. The Guyver
1991, Science Fiction, Mark Hamill, Vivian Wu

8:00 p.m. Guyver 2: Dark Hero
1994, Science Fiction, David Hayter

12:00 a.m. Guyver 2: Dark Hero
1994, Science Fiction, David Hayter

3:00 a.m. Fugitive Alien
1986, Science Fiction, Tatsuya Azuma, Miyuki Tanigawa

SUNDAY, 7/9

2:00 p.m. The Guyver
1991, Science Fiction, Mark Hamill, Vivian Wu

4:00 p.m. Guyver 2: Dark Hero
1994, Science Fiction, David Hayter

SATURDAY, 7/15

2:00 p.m. The Thing (1982)
1982, Science Fiction, Kurt Russell

4:00 p.m. Guyver 2: Dark Hero
1994, Science Fiction, David Hayter

8:00 p.m. Warning Sign
1985, Science Fiction, Sam Waterston, Kathleen Quinlan

12:00 a.m. Warning Sign
1985, Science Fiction, Sam Waterston, Kathleen Quinlan

3:00 a.m. Starforce
1986, Science Fiction, Tatsuya Azuma, Miyuki Tanigawa

SUNDAY, 7/16

12:00 p.m. Critters
1986, Science Fiction, Dee Wallace Stone, Scott Grimes

2:00 p.m. Critters 3
1991, Horror, Aimee Brooks, Don Opper

4:00 p.m. Critters 4
1991, Brad Dourif, Angela Bassett

MONDAY, 7/17

9:00 p.m. King Kong vs Godzilla
1963, Science Fiction, Michael Keith

1:00 a.m. King Kong vs Godzilla
1963, Science Fiction, Michael Keith

TUESDAY, 7/18

9:00 p.m. King Kong Escapes
1968, Science Fiction, Rhodes Reason

1:00 a.m. King Kong Escapes
1968, Science Fiction, Rhodes Reason

WEDNESDAY, 7/19

9:00 p.m. Godzilla on Monster Island
1972, Science Fiction, Hiroshi Ishikawa

1:00 a.m. Godzilla on Monster Island
1972, Science Fiction, Hiroshi Ishikawa

THURSDAY, 7/20

9:00 p.m. Godzilla vs Megalon
1976, Science Fiction, Katsuhiko Sasakai

1:00 a.m. Godzilla vs Megalon
1976, Science Fiction, Katsuhiko Sasakai

FRIDAY, 7/21

9:00 p.m. Godzilla vs the Cosmic Monster
1974, Science Fiction, Masaaki Daimon

1:00 a.m. Godzilla vs the Cosmic Monster
1974, Science Fiction, Masaaki Daimon

SATURDAY, 7/22

2:00 p.m. Fugitive Alien
1986, Science Fiction, Tatsuya Azuma

4:00 p.m. The Evil of Frankenstein
1964, Horror, Peter Cushing

8:00 p.m. Shadow Zone
1990, Science Fiction, Louise Fletcher

12:00 a.m. Shadow Zone
1990, Science Fiction, Louise Fletcher

3:00 a.m. Barbarian Queen
1985, Fantasy, Lana Clarkson

SUNDAY, 7/23

2:00 p.m. Frankenstein: The True Story
1973, Horror, James Mason

FRIDAY, 7/28

7:00 p.m. The Making of Star Wars
Documentary

8:00 p.m. Star Wars
1977, Science Fiction, Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher

11:00 p.m. The Making of The Empire Strikes Back
Documentary

12:00 a.m. Ghost of Frankenstein
1942, Horror, Lon Chaney Jr., Bela Lugosi

1:30 a.m. House of Frankenstein
1944, Horror, Boris Karloff, Lon Chaney Jr.

SATURDAY, 7/29

2:00 p.m. The Man with the Power
1977, Science Fiction, Bob Neil, Persis Khambatta

4:00 p.m. Journey to the Far Side of the Sun
1969, Science Fiction, Roy Thinnes, Lynn Loring

7:00 p.m. The Making of the Empire Strikes Back
Documentary

8:00 p.m. The Empire Strikes Back
1980, Science Fiction, Harrison Ford, Carrie Fisher

11:00 p.m. Return of the Jedi: Classic Creatures
Documentary

12:00 a.m. Curse of the Werewolf
1961, Horror, Clifford Evans,

2:00 a.m. The Wolfman
1941, Horror, Lon Chaney, Jr.

3:30 a.m. The Werewolf of London
1935, Horror, Henry Hull

SUNDAY, 7/30

1:00 p.m. Creature from the Black Lagoon
1954, Horror, Richard Carlson, Julia Adams

3:00 p.m. Revenge of the Creature
1955, Horror, John Agar

5:00 p.m. The Creature Walks Among Us
1956, Horror, Jeff Morrow

7:00 p.m. Return of the Jedi: Classic Creatures
Documentary

8:00 p.m. Return of the Jedi
1983, Science Fiction, Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher

11:00 p.m. From Star Wars to Jedi: Making of a Saga
Documentary, Mark Hamill

12:00 a.m. Missile Monsters
1958, Science Fiction, Walter Reed, Lois Collier

1:30 a.m. Missile to the Moon
1959, Science Fiction, Richard Travis

AUGUST MOVIES
ON THE SCI-FI CHANNEL

SATURDAY, 8/5
2:00 p.m. Monster on the Campus 1958, Science Fiction, Arthur Franz
4:00 p.m. Son of Frankenstein 1939, Horror, Boris Karloff
8:00 p.m. The Hidden 2 1994, Science Fiction
12:00 a.m. The Hidden 2 1994, Science Fiction
3:00 a.m. The Boy Who Cried Werewolf 1973, Horror, Kerwin Matthews

SUNDAY, 8/6
3:00 p.m. The Snow Creature 1954, Horror, Paul Langton
4:30 p.m. The Hidden 2 1994, Science Fiction

SATURDAY, 8/12
2:00 p.m. To Die For 1989, Horror
4:00 p.m. The Hidden 2 1994, Science Fiction
8:00 p.m. Silent Running 1972, Science Fiction, Bruce Dern
12:00 a.m. Silent Running 1972, Science Fiction, Bruce Dern
3:00 a.m. Black Friday 1940, Horror, Boris Karloff

SUNDAY, 8/13
3:00 p.m. The Mummy's Ghost 1943, Horror, Lon Chaney Jr.
4:30 p.m. The 4-D Man 1959, Science Fiction, Robert Lansing, Lee Meriwether

SATURDAY, 8/19
2:00 p.m. Human Feelings 1978, Comedy, Nancy Walker, Billy Crystal
4:00 p.m. The Car 1977, Horror, James Brolin
8:00 p.m. Akira 1989, Animation
12:00 a.m. Akira 1989, Animation
3:00 a.m. The Mummy's Hand 1940, Horror, Dick Foran

SUNDAY, 8/20
3:00 p.m. Akira 1989, Animation

MONDAY, 8/21
9:00 p.m. Doctor Mordrid: Master of the Unknown 1992, Supernatural, Jeffrey Combs, Yvette Nipar
1:00 a.m. Doctor Mordrid: Master of the Unknown 1992, Supernatural, Jeffrey Combs, Yvette Nipar

TUESDAY, 8/22
9:00 p.m. Crash & Burn 1990, Science Fiction, Ralph White, Paul Ganus
1:00 a.m. Crash & Burn 1990, Science Fiction, Ralph White, Paul Ganus

WEDNESDAY, 8/23
9:00 p.m. Parasite 1982, Science Fiction, Demi Moore
1:00 a.m. Parasite 1982, Science Fiction, Demi Moore

THURSDAY, 8/24
9:00 p.m. Trancers 2: The Return of Jack Deth 1991, Science Fiction, Tim Thomerson
1:00 a.m. Trancers 2: The Return of Jack Deth 1991, Science Fiction, Tim Thomerson

FRIDAY, 8/25
9:00 p.m. Trancers 3: Deth Lives 1992, Science Fiction, Tim Thomerson
1:00 a.m. Trancers 3: Deth Lives 1992, Science Fiction, Tim Thomerson

SATURDAY, 8/26
2:00 p.m. The Bamboo Saucer 1968, Science Fiction, Dan Duryea
4:00 p.m. Akira 1989, Animation
8:00 p.m. Circuitry Man 1990, Science Fiction, Jim Metzler
12:00 a.m. Circuitry Man 1990, Science Fiction, Jim Metzler
3:00 a.m. The Mummy's Tomb 1942, Horror, Lon Chaney Jr.

SUNDAY, 8/27
3:00 p.m. Dr. Cook's Garden 1970, Horror, Bing Crosby
4:30 p.m. Kiss of Evil 1963, Horror, Clifford Evans

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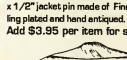
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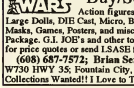
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Horror director Dario Argento: Is he a master of shock, or merely of schlock?

BY LAWRENCE TUCKER

WHILE CULTISTS REVERE DARIO ARGENTO as a sort of "Italian Hitchcock," others regard the director as, at best, a flamboyant schlockmeister. Ephraim Katz, in his *Film Encyclopedia*, dismisses Argento as one who "over the years has established a reputation as Italy's stylish master of cheap blood and gore." I'd say that's about right.

You can decide for yourself after reading *Broken Mirrors/Broken Minds: The Dark Dreams of Dario Argento* by Maitland McDonagh (New York: Carol Publishing, 298 pp., Paperback $18.95). Argento is a visually inventive director whose films, sloppily plotted and indifferently acted, tend to revolve around novel and sadistic ways of killing people, usually young women. In order to facilitate these killings, it's necessary that characters behave foolishly and implausibly, neglecting to confide in those who might help them, venturing where they shouldn't, wandering off alone when they should be on their guard, and in general putting themselves at risk.



The U.S. poster for Italian horror director Dario Argento's 1982 film Unsane.

It's also necessary, in these films, that the killers possess superhuman—indeed, virtually supernatural—reserves of cunning, speed, and luck; Argento's killers pop up at exactly the right moment to polish off lone and vulnerable victims with their slashing blades, then slip miraculously away without being caught. The killers themselves tend to be Jekyll-and-Hyde types, outwardly upright and trustworthy, who somehow manage to fool everybody (including the audience) until, at the end of the movie, they're revealed as secret psychotics with some convenient trumped-up grudge against the world.

Finally, in order to keep the audience guessing as to the killer's identity, Argento is forced to withhold crucial information, so we typically get lots of killer's-eye-view shots, extreme closeups of eyeballs (and even, in one film, of a ludicrously pulsating brain), gloved hands wielding daggers (gloved so that we don't know whether the hand is that of a man or a woman), sinister whispers (which, again, disguise the killer's sex), and other means, both skillful and annoying, designed to keep us in the dark.

It seems clear from his films that Argento is an impatient man: impatient with rational explanations and the need to create a convincing story, impatient to get on to the next killing. His films are scary, atmospheric, and ultimately rather mechanical.

In recent years, what's more, they have failed to find an American distributor. His best film is arguably his first, 1970's *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage*, thanks largely to an ingenious plot twist borrowed from mystery writer Fredric Brown. His latest film is arguably his worst.

Given his limitations and the downward trend of his career, one has to ask whether the director really warrants as scholarly and intelligent a book as this one. Based on McDonagh's master's thesis, it acknowledges early on that "the thriller is still a low-rent genre" and generally avoids making extravagant claims for Argento's work, which it examines, film by film, with wit, insight, and affection.

Round in Circles: Poltergeists, Pranksters, and the Secret History of the Cropwatchers *by Jim Schnabel (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 302 pp., Hardcover, $24.95).* ***The Bermuda Triangle Mystery—Solved*** *by Larry Kusche (Prometheus Books, 316 pp., Paperback, $16.95).*

It's been a long time coming, but UFOs are finally official. The tiny island nation known as the Maldives has recently issued a series of full-color postage stamps, entitled "Mysteries of the Universe," commemorating flying saucers, the Loch Ness Monster, the Abominable Snowman, long-lost Atlantis, the Bermuda Triangle, and crop

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circles. So all of these things must be real—otherwise how can they put them on stamps?

Two titles from the hardheaded folks at Prometheus suggest otherwise. The firm publishes books on a wide range of subjects, but it specializes in debunking everything from health-food fads to creationism, with particular attention to the sort of "unexplained phenomena" featured on those stamps.

Round in Circles (wonderful title) tackles the crop circle craze, "one of the strangest popular mysteries of our time," which began in England in August 1980 when a tourist wandering the Wiltshire hills, several miles south of Stonehenge, noticed three huge circular depressions in the wheat and oat fields below him. "At first sight they appear to be spots where helicopters have landed," said the *Wiltshire Times*, "but the circles seem too well-defined and regular to be caused that way. They are all in the middle of fields, with no tracks leading from them."

Three more circles were discovered the following summer, on a hilltop in Hampshire called Cheesefoot Headand, from there the phenomenon spread. Soon such circles were cropping up by the hundreds, all over the world, in increasingly complex and beautiful designs, and local people were reporting "sulphur smells," strange "humming" and "trilling" noises, and "energy beams" of pure white light emanating from the fields. British circle sites, not surprisingly, became a mecca for New Agers, poltergeist-hunters, channelers, UFO buffs seeking real-life *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, meteorologists chasing whirlwinds, quasi-scientific investigators known as "cerealogists," and, of course, the media.

Some of the wind was taken out of the movement when, in September 1991, two amiable English drinking buddies, Dave Chorley and Doug Bower, demonstrated to the press how they'd been creating these circles in local farmers' fields, using an iron bar and, later, wooden planks, since the mid-1970s; indeed, those first circles in Wiltshire and Hampshire had been their handiwork. Other circles were revealed to have been made by copycat pranksters, such as the group known as the Wessex Skeptics.

Yet while some cerealogists initially admitted they'd been gullible—"We have all been conned," said one—the rest went on believing, even when circles pronounced "genuine in every way" turned out to be fakes. "I just wish the hoaxers would come to their senses and realize it is a waste of time," wrote one true believer, after having been bamboozled.

And it is a waste of time. No matter how many flying saucers, faith healers, and self-proclaimed psychics are exposed as frauds, there will always be people who'll declare, as the crop circle diehards continue to do, "Surely they can't *all* be fakes."

Round in Circles is populated with a collection of pranksters, misfits, and crackpots; Jim Schnabel, a very funny writer, treats them all with with amused tolerance. "Those who dismiss the subject as so much human folly," he says, "miss the point that such folly is, to a great extent, what makes us human."

Folly is also what makes bestsellers out of books that celebrate the irrational; the debunkers are never as popular. Books that touted Uri Geller's "miraculous psychokinetic powers" outsold James Randi's exposé of Geller as just another clever stage magician. Books proclaiming the perils of the so-called Bermuda Triangle, such as the meretricious 1974 bestseller by Charles Berlitz, made their authors a fortune; *The Bermuda Triangle Mystery—Solved*, by Larry Kusche, has remained relatively unknown.

Kusche was a reference librarian at Arizona State University who discovered, in the course of researching the Triangle, that this "sinister no-man's-land" bordering on Bermuda, Puerto Rico, and the tip of Florida was statistically no more dangerous—and no more mysterious—than any similar stretch of ocean. His book originally appeared in 1986; Prometheus has just reprinted it, complete with a new introduction.

Modern legend has it that the Triangle is a graveyard of lost ships and aircraft, a kind of black hole into which men and machines are continually vanishing. Some have speculated that the region contains the doorway to another dimension, that it's a "reverse gravity field" where magnets and electricity go haywire, or—again à la *Close Encounters*—that it's a happy hunting ground for UFOs.

Yet over and over, in case after case, Kusche sifts the lies from the truth and discovers that, disappointing as it may seem to the occultists among us, there's a perfectly sane, boring, natural explanation for everything.

Patiently he demonstrates that the missing ships and planes described in the press and paperbacks as having "disappeared into the Triangle in calm weather" were actually sailing into hurricanes, were in demonstrably unstable condition, or were nowhere near the Triangle when they went down. (One such plane exploded off the coast of Ireland; a ship claimed as a victim of the Triangle in fact sank in the Pacific.) Pilots described as "experienced" were in fact mere students.

In one case, terrified radio communications between a pilot and his air base—"Everything is wrong…strange…. We can't be sure of any direction. Even the ocean doesn't look as it should!"—was simply invented.

"It is no more logical to try to find a common cause for all the disappearances in the Triangle," concludes Kusche, "than, for example, to try to find one cause for all the automobile accidents in Arizona.... The Legend of the Bermuda Triangle is a manufactured mystery."

These two books, like others from Prometheus, document what the great Baltimore sage H. L. Mencken called "the irresistible reasonableness of the nonsensical." But I prefer the way my ex-shrink once put it: "Reality," he said, "is never enough for some people." □

LOST MOON

Continued from page 61

I. Gordon's *Village of the Giants;* singing "Gary, Indiana" in *The Music Man;* and even contending with a psycho serial killer played by Johnny Cash in *Door to Door Maniac.* His acting career continued to flourish as he reached adulthood; his performances in George Lucas's classic first Hollywood feature *American Graffiti* and in John Wayne's lyrical Western elegy *The Shootist* won warm critical and audience response.

In 1978, Roger Corman gave Howard his first chance at directing, with the comedy *Grand Theft Auto*—to which he also contributed his services as writer and actor—followed by *Night Shift, Splash, Cocoon, Willow* (again working with Lucas), and *Parenthood,* which grossed in excess of $100 million. His 1991 film *Backdraft,* starring Robert DeNiro and Kurt Russell, received four Academy Award nominations. He then directed *Far and Away* and *The Paper.* Howard wouldn't mind acting again, but, while he still receives offers, his duties as father, director, and Imagine Films executive preclude him from accepting. A hundred years from now, he hopes it will be his abilities as a storyteller that will be best remembered.

The measure of *Apollo 13*'s commercial success will be taken on June 30, when the film opens across America; but Howard counts success a little differently. "If, at the end of all of it, they acknowledge how much we were doing with so little twenty-five years ago," he says, "and if that then begs the question, 'Well, then what are we doing today, with all the advances that have been made?' If they want to weigh that question, fine, I'd be happy with that. But mostly, the film is just a celebration of a great period in our history and a little-remembered event that, within the annals of the space program, is considered to be one of its great triumphs."

When pressed, Howard allows that if the space program has been put on the backburner, it's because we as a society lack the number-one adversary that we had in the 1960s. "It seems that human beings do things more out of fear than out of a sense of adventure or inspiration, and yet I think we should be afraid. Not that Russia is going to resurface and dominate space and drop bombs on us, but that while we, as a culture, actually played a primary role in the initial exploration of space, if we don't continue to pursue it, some other culture will take over and we'll all stand around saying, 'Geez, we started it.' Starting it is not enough. Human beings must explore, and there are all kinds of motives. But the fact of the matter is, as Dave Scott likes to say, 'The sun's gonna burn out in about 3 billion years, so we better start working on a plan.'" □

See the Channel News column in this issue to find out how you can win a trip to U.S.A. Space Camp to celebrate the release of Apollo 13.

VIRTUOSITY

Continued from page 67

His luck with authors was only slightly better with his previous film, *The Lawnmower Man,* which held a flimsy link with the Stephen King short story of the same name. "The truth is, Stephen King liked *The Lawnmower Man,*" says Leonard. "He was just pissed at New Line Cinema because of how they marketed it [as "Stephen King's *The Lawnmower Man*"]. Stephen and I get along fine. I mean, I get books of his all the time."

Several members of his crew have come by to tell the director that he's needed on set—back to Sheila 3.2 (who does NOT escape from VR) and the simulator. He takes a few huge bites of his now-cold lunch to make up for nearly an hour of talking, and thanks us for our time—even though he's the one who must show Paramount Pictures a director's cut of the film ten days after wrapping principal photography. "This movie is in theaters August 4th," he says. "We're producing thirty visual effects—and about 150 effects shots total—to be shown on that screen in less than two months. I have four Avid editing systems going, all networked to Mediashare over the Pacific Bell network. I mean, no one's ever had this kind of postproduction system before. We've had to reinvent post with tools that have been around all along, but which no one's really synergized—because that's the only way we're going to get it done in time. The studio knows the only way to get this out for August is to let me blow the doors off how it's usually done."

Now, with *Virtuosity* in full swing and several other projects in development, Leonard is guiding himself toward a twenty-first century multimedia filmmaking career with L2 Communications, described in its press notes as a "virtual studio" and a "unique linkup of several high-tech multimedia companies, including Cyberlab 7 and Infinite Interactions." L2 represents Leonard's attempt to "integrate more immersive cinematic experiences," says the director, who got his start with a Super-8 camera at the tender age of seven.

"I see my films as more experience films than narrative. Narrative, to me, is something that is great, but there's something else that cinema's about that really never fully flowered in the beginning. Sound came in and kind of squelched some of what was going on in cinematic expression that now is just starting to flower again. So, that's why the idea of immersive environments that can be mediated by people, individuals, and groups of people is very interesting to me. It's all about ritual. We have to create a new ritual around this stuff. So what is the ritual going to be? I think there are a million answers to that—and I might have some ideas about some rituals I'd like to do with a million people." □



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Quiz

Vampires Are Forever

WELL, MAYBE NOT forever, but the vampires of the popular television show *Forever Knight* are ensured a third season, as a unique deal is now in place that will allow *Forever Knight* to run on the USA Network and remain in syndication at the same time!

We understand there are a few changes brewing in the third season—the rumors are flying on the Internet—we'll bring you all the facts as soon as the dust settles. So, while we're waiting, we welcome our new vampire in-laws to the family with the following quiz.

1. Besides Nick Knight, what other creatures of the night has Geraint Wyn Davies played on television?

2. What is the name of the fanzine devoted to the vampire LaCroix?

3. What was the name of the writer of vampire fiction whom Nick falls hard for, and who plays her in "Stranger Than Fiction?"

4. What was the date on which the TV movie entitled *Nick Knight* first aired?

5. What former rock star played Nick in *Nick Knight*?

6. What is the name of Nick's sister, whom the vampire LaCroix falls in love with in "Be My Valentine?"

7. What substance is used as a blood substitute on the set of *Forever Knight*?

8. What is the native language of the *Forever Knight* vampires?

9. Who is the only actor to have been in every installation of the *Forever Knight* saga, including Nick Knight?

10. What Welsh town is the birthplace of Geraint Wyn Davies?

11. What do Slavonic Gypsies call vampires?

12. To what famed comedy troup did John Kapelos belong from 1978 to 1984?

13. Who is the only mortal privy to Nick's dark secret, and who plays her?

14. What is the game of choice of the men of *Forever Knight*, and who is the driving force behind its continued popularity?

15. What is the name of the vampire after-hours club owned by Janette?

16. What do *Forever Knight* vampires and road signs have in common?

17. Which *Forever Knight* cast-member has a Baptist minister for a father, and which one was sired by a Welsh congregational preacher?

18. What year was Nick "brought across"?

19. What is the title of the episode in which Janette was "brought across"?

20. What is the name of the nun whom Nick falls in love with (and LaCroix kills) in "Capital Offense"?

21. What is the name of the last episode of the first season of *Forever Knight*?

22. What are the names of the police chiefs in seasons one and two?

23. What are the names of the show's two executive producers?

24. Nigel Bennett played the role of a photographer in what superstar's TV biopic?



Photo: Matthew Welsh/Sci-fi

Forever Knight's *evil vampire LaCroix has a fanzine devoted to him.*

ANSWERS:

1. The vampire Klaus on *Dracula: The Series.*
2. *Les Enfants De LaCroix*
3. Emily Weiss played by Lanssa Lapchinski
4. August 20, 1989
5. Rick Springfield
6. Fleur
7. Ribena, a black currant juice from England.
8. French
9. John Kapelos
10. Swansea
11. Dhampir
12. Chicago's Second City comedy troupe
13. Dr. Natalie Lambert, played by Catherine Disher
14. Golf. Nigel Bennett organizes regular golfing excursions.
15. Raven
16. The contact lenses used when they're vamping out are made of the same 3M coating as glow-in-the-dark street signs.
17. Deborah Duchene and Geraint Wyn Davies, respectively
18. 1228 A.D.
19. "A Fate Worse Than Death"
20. Marnie
21. "Love You To Death"
22. Lorraine and Colton, respectively
23. Jon Slan and James D. Parriott
24. Madonna



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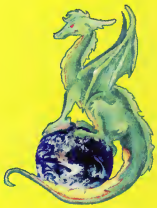
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Dear *SFE*,

I'm writing in regards to the program that you recently aired on the Sci-Fi Series Showcase, *Nightmare Cafe*. I don't think I've ever seen a program that has grabbed my attention so quickly—not *Star Trek*, not *The X-Files*, and not even *Doctor Who*! Unfortunately, there was a mix-up in our local television listing, and I missed some of the plot…but every night following, I was glued to the television! I was amazed to learn that *Nightmare Cafe* only lasted two months—the structure was so flexible that I feel it could have been immensely popular!

My main purpose for writing is to see if you know whether anything on the show is available. I've never seen episodes listed in video catalogs, so I doubt that it has been released on video, but I hope that's not the case! I certainly would have taped them myself, but for some reason my VCR doesn't allow me to tape the Sci-Fi Channel! Do you ever plan on showing it again? Maybe by that time I can get a better VCR. Also, if you happen to know of any resources on the Internet, that would be wonderful too. I'm desperate to learn more about this program!

Carson Maynard

Sorry, we don't know of any books, videos or net resources, but we suggest you try posting a note on the Sci-Fi Channel World Wide Web site: http://www.scifi.com. so perhaps someone else can help you out. Nightmare Cafe *will return eventually (the "Collector's Series Showcase" programs are rotated, but it's a large library, so it'll take a while). Start saving up for that cable-ready VCR!*

Dear Editor,

I just bought the June issue of *SFE* yesterday, mainly because of the article about *Batman Forever*. It is the section about the origin of Robin that prompted me to write this. There are several pieces of information that Berthe Roegger left out. First off, the origin of the movie Robin, as it is described in the article, is the same as the origin of the Dick Grayson Robin from the comic books. Second, the circus acrobat origin of the Jason Todd Robin no longer exists. The "official" origin, if you will, is that Jason Todd was a kid from the streets that Batman took in and trained as Robin. This year's Robin annual provides background information that the author might find useful in future articles.

There is one other correction that I would like to make. Batman has never been referred to as "the Darkwing Detective." Darkwing is a cartoon character from Disney. The term that is used is "Dark Knight Detective."

Chris Lisy



A reader clarifies the origin of Batman *(Val Kilmer)* Forever*'s Robin (Chris O'Donnell).*

Dear Flixman:

As a first time reader of your magazine I was very impressed with both the writing and overall quality of your publication. (You know that I'm leading up to something.) Living in Bangor, Maine has afforded the members of my family and me the unique opportunity of appearing several times as extras in locally made Stephen King productions, and *The Langoliers* was no exception. As a matter of fact, although my brother and husband appear immediately to Stephen's right in the photo on page 57 (*SFE* 5/95), I am out of the shot. We did, however, enjoy spending a hot July day of shooting on the tarmac at Bangor International Airport.

Now that our family has bought out all copies of *SFE* in Bangor and Augusta, Maine, how can we get a copy of the photo to save for the family scrapbook?

Please note that for whatever reason, Berthe Roegger has incorrectly identified Bronson Pinchot's character as "Baxter Harris." In actuality, he played "Craig Toomey," a twisted, tortured soul. A quick reference to the original story and a check of my memorabilia from the shoot confirms this.

Out of the picture but hopefully in the miniseries.

Joyce Henckler

Out of fairness to Berthe (a veteran of the business, and one of the few media writers cited by Stephen King in his book Danse Macabre*), we should point out that she came in at the last minute, when the writer we originally assigned to cover* Batman *failed to meet our high standards, and again after we realized that we had failed to include any coverage of the Stephen King drama. Considering how quickly she delivered, she did a fine job overall.*

Dear Editor:

I enjoyed the recent article on *Sliders* (June, '95), and I thought that your readers might be interested to know that they can send comments via e-mail directly to the show by addressing the mail to: Sliders@Delphi.com.

Also, I think an error was made with the photos for the aforementioned article.

While page 49's photo is indeed Mallory (Jerry O'Connell) & Professor Maximillian Arturo (John Rhys-Davies), I don't believe that the picture on page 48 is of Quinn Mallory & Rembrandt Brown. Who are they?

Scott Verity

That photo—which at this point remains unidentified—came directly from Fox, in a Sliders*-only package. Viewing the slides, we had our suspicions, so we called Fox's photo editor, who assured us that we had the correct information on the slides. Since, at the time we went to press, the show had not aired, we deferred to their judgment.*

While we suspected there was some possibility that we had misidentified an actor, we had no idea that these two actors don't even appear in Sliders*.*

Our theory is, those two guys star in Sliders *in a parallel world.*

Dear *SFE*,

I imagine that I am one of your older readers (and viewers); I remember seeing *Forbidden Planet* as a teenager in Portland, Oregon, more than forty years ago. Seeing the widescreen version for the first time since then was an eye-opening experience! Over the years, seeing it many times squished into TV screen proportions, I forgot the magnificent vistas the original film presented.

I just wanted to thank you, and encourage you to do more of the same—I only wish the "premium" channels were as aware as you are that there are people who care! Also, I heard that Ray Bradbury was writing a script for a new movie based on his novel *Fahrenheit 451*. Bradbury is another lifelong favorite; please keep us informed on this!

Robert Anderson

Bradbury completed a first draft; Tom Puryear, a relative newcomer to films whose first major film script is the next Schwarzenegger vehicle Eraser*, is preparing the final shooting script. Mel Gibson's Icon Productions is producing the film; if Gibson likes the script well enough, he will star in the film as well.*

As to letterboxed films, the folks in programming and acquisitions tell me they strive to obtain wide-screen transfers of films whenever these are available. Unfortunately, that is not very often. The compelling Japanese animated feature Akira *will be shown in letterboxed version in August. Enjoy it! We love hearing from all of you! Send e-mail to flixman@dorsai.org. Paper mail goes to Sci-Fi Entertainment 441 Carlisle Drive, Herndon, VA 22070.*



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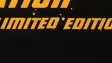
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